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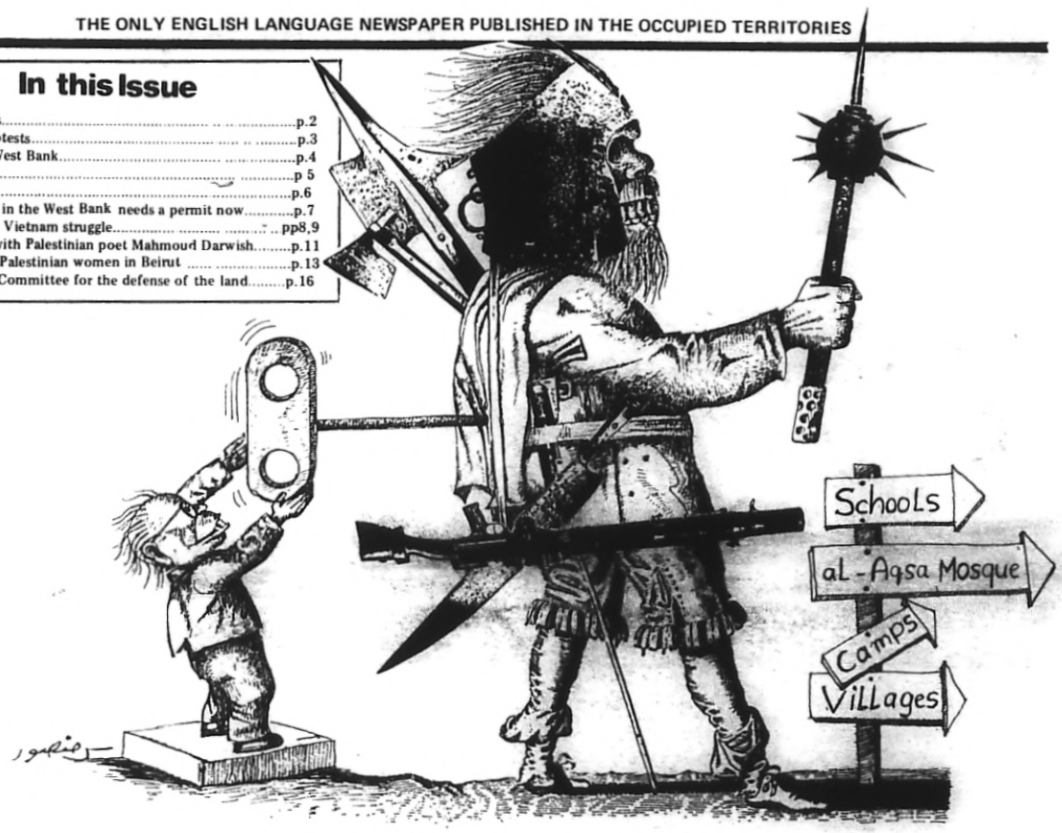

300 ISRAELI SOLDIERS PATROL OLD CITY TO SUPPRESS PALESTINIAN PROTESTS AT ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER

ISRAELI SETTLERS ATTACK AL-AQSA MOSQUE

More than 300 Israeli soldiers and around 100 police patrolled the Old City of Jerusalem, March 11, to try and quell Palestinian protests at the attempt of some 46 Kiryat Arba settlers to takeover al-Aqsa mosque the night before. There were clashes all day.

The latest attempt to seize al-Aqsa started shortly after 10:30pm March 10. Palestinian guards posted on the southern side of the mosque heard voices at the bottom of an outside wall. The wall is also the boundary of the Old City. At first the guards thought the voices were those of tourists, however they looked over and saw six settlers.

Not far away other guards, who had just started patrolling, were searching the area when they saw between 25 and 40 other settlers carrying rifles and digging equipment and standing below the women's mosque.

Officials at the mosque, who declined to be identified, told *Al Fajr* that the point where the infiltrators were standing is only three meters high and much easier to climb than the wall of the women's mosque. The officials think the settlers were attempting to climb the walls and take the mosque by storm.

Another standing theory was that the settlers might have been trying to enter the shrine by way of a tunnel which was excavated several months ago. The controversial tunnel was sealed off by the mosque authorities. Nevertheless the fact that the settlers were carrying digging equipment gives some credence to this theory, mosque officials said.

As soon as the attempt was discovered the guards summoned help. One of the guardians, a tall thin man in his 30s told *Al Fajr* that more than 60 border guards and policemen came with explosives experts and dogs. The police chased the would-be intruders and later announced they had captured four of them. That night, a police spokesman said that they had arrested another 38 Jewish settlers at the house of Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, a leading figure in the Kach movement. Ariel was number two on the Kach list at the last Knesset elections. The group, some of whom are settlers from Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, were found in possession of large quantities of explosives, automatic rifles and pistols. The police said that the group are all members of the Kach movement.

Al Hamishmar reported, March 14, that among those arrested, 10 are serving soldiers. Meanwhile, the settlers were remanded, March 13, for further investigation.

Israeli papers reported that the police had been aware of the operation for a long time. The papers explained that the police were watching the group and that patrols were posted near the mosque on the same night—hence the quick arrests.

Kach leader, Meir Kahane, who is currently in the United States, released a statement praising the attack but insisting that he knew nothing about it.

In reaction to the settlers' attack, Hatem Abd al-Kader,

continued on page 4

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP REPORT

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 150, March 18 1983:

Number of original articles submitted to censor.....25
Number of articles totally cenored.....12
Number of articles mutilated beyond use.....2
Number of articles partially censored but used.....6
Number of articles passed.....5

PALESTINIANS INJURED IN SIDON DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST ISRAELI DETENTION OF PALESTINIANS

Four Palestinian women were injured by gunfire and four Palestinian men were arrested, March 16, during a large demonstration in Ain al-Hilweh camp, near Sidon, in South Lebanon. Hundreds of Palestinian women and students protested against the continued detention of more than 5,000 men at the Israeli-operated al-Ansar detention camp in South lebanon.

According to Israeli newspapers 500 women who were waiting near Israeli military headquarters in Sidon for released prisoners to arrive started demonstrating as soon as the 40 detainees were released. "The women were outraged and began throwing stones at the soldiers," *The Jerusalem Post* reported. Israel Radio said that the women were joined by youths and students in stoning the military headquarters. The Israeli army then fired gas cannisters and live ammunition into the crowd.

Foreign news correspondents in the area reported that four women suffered gunshot wounds and were taken to hospitals for treatment. An Israeli military spokesman said only one 20 year-old woman was wounded.

In another related incident residents of the Lebanese town of Aley confronted Israeli troops and prevented them from entering their town. News reports from Aley said residents used all types of weapons to confront the Israelis.

Demonstrators in Sidon, Lebanon, protest the detention of more than 5000 men at the Israeli prison camp in Ansar, South Lebanon.

Two Israelis Killed in Lebanon in Attacks on Foreign Forces

Two Israeli officers were killed March 16 after a land mine exploded under their car in the Kahhaleh area, east of Beirut, an Israeli military spokesman announced. On the same day 12 soldiers from the multi-national forces were injured after they were attacked by unidentified gunmen. Meanwhile, the military situation in the Beqa'a Valley was tense as both Israeli and Syrian troops deployed more forces on their front lines.

The two Israeli officers, a major and a captain, died after their jeep struck a land mine dug into a dirt road commonly used by the Israeli army. The military spokesman who announced the incident said that the mine had been freshly planted on the road.

Two days earlier, an Israeli military spokesman announced that nine Israeli soldiers were injured in Sidon after they came under fire from unidentified gunmen. A Lebanese group claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said caused the death of four soldiers, and the wounding of at least 20 others. During the past few days, the Israeli media has reported that military operations against the Israeli army have increased dramatically. Israel Radio announced, March 14, that the Israeli army in South Lebanon had been put on alert, "in order to confront the increased wave of military attacks."

Seven soldiers from the Italian contingent of the multinational forces were injured after their two jeeps were attacked with rockets, west of Beirut airport. The Italian patrol tried to engage their attackers but were unsuccessful.

Several hours later five US marines were injured near Beirut Internatinal Airport, after they were attacked by unidentified commandos. The US Marine Commander later said that his men received slight injuries from fragments of a hand-grenade thrown at their jeep while they were on patrol. Later a group calling itself "Islamic Holy War" claimed responsibility for the attack on the US Marines, *The Jerusalem Post* reported. No one claimed responsibility for the attack against the Italian unit.

The government-run Lebanese radio station noted that the attacks followed statements by the Israeli Foreign Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, who said in Washington that neither the Lebanese army, nor the multinational forces will be able to handle Lebanon's security. In Rome, the PLO representative accused the Israeli army of being behind the attacks on the US and Italian contingents of the multinational forces.

Fears Mount of an Israeli Strike in Beqa'a

Political observers predict an increase in the chances of an Israeli military offensive against Palestinian and Syrian forces in the Beqa'a valley, especially after US-mediated negotiations ended without any success. The failure of the talks coincided with warnings by high-ranking Israeli officials including the newly appointed defence minister, Moshe Arens, that "Israel will decide the extent of the war if there is a military operation against Syria."

Earlier in the week, foreign journalists in Lebanon said that Israeli troops were reinforcing positions throughout the week, following two incidents of exchanges of fire between Israeli and Syrian forces. Israeli sources accused Syria of violating the cease-fire, March 13, after they shelled Israeli lines. On March 14, Israeli and Syrian positions exchanged fire some four kilometers east of Karm al-Louz. No casualties were reported on their side, Israeli spokespeople claimed.

Syria enforced its positions with tanks and more troops. According to reports by the state-run Lebanese Radio, dozens of tanks were seen on their way to Syrian positions in the Beqa'a.

NO COMPENSATION FOR BLAZE VICTIM

John Jolly, a middle-aged Briton, complained, March 15, that the Israeli government "has no intention of paying me compensation" for belongings destroyed in a fire aboard a Greek ship over a year ago. His complaint followed a report in *The Jerusalem Post* earlier this month that three passengers who were on the same ship were paid IS1.5 million each as compensation.

Jolly said he wrote the Israeli prime minister with his complaint six months ago and as yet has received no reply.

Jolly was on his way from Greece to Israel about one year ago when the ship he was travelling on caught fire outside Haifa port. Israel later announced that the blaze was caused by a bomb planted by an Iraqi group. All Jolly's belongings were destroyed in the blaze.

Saad Haddad: Israel's Triggerman in Lebanon

One of the most notorious examples of religion in the service of fascism is the alliance between Major Saad Haddad of the "Free Lebanon" forces and the High Adventure Ministries of Los Angeles. High Adventure runs the radio station Voice of Hope, beamed from northern Israel throughout southern and central Lebanon. While much of the programming presents typical fundamentalist preaching and ubiquitous country and western music, the station is continually used by Haddad to harangue the Lebanese. One person who frequently organises fund-raising events for the radio station is the born-again singer, Pat Boone.

It is from the Voice of Hope that Haddad announces his periodic shelling of Sidon and other towns, attacks which continue to claim many innocent victims. On numerous occasions, Haddad has ordered the gunning down or shelling-of civilians, despite his so-called "faith." Haddad is known to have opened fire on a Lebanese Boy Scouts Jamboree, to have shelled the city of Sidon repeatedly, and to have fired on UN peacekeeping troops in a fit of rage when they would not obey an order to leave "his" territory. While he, and his Israeli sponsors, have denied that he had any role in the Beirut massacres, Haddad was in Beirut at the time of the butchery and although he claims the Lebanese Army has exonerated him, their spokesman, according to Jack Anderson s column (October 16, 1982), denies this.

Executive Director
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A charitable, non-political organisation active in the Middle East seeks applicants for the position of executive director as chief executive officer of the organisation.

The executive director must have strong administrative and management skills and an ability to communicate effectively with corporate officers and the news media. Prior corporate fund-raising experience and some familiarity with the Middle East is highly desirable but not a necessary requirement. Salary open.

Send a detailed resume, salary requirements and names of references to:

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Correspondent Gets Heavy Sentence For Distributing Magazine

The Hebron military court sentenced Fawzi Shweiki, *Al Fajr's* correspondent in the city to one month imprisonment, seven months suspended and a fine to IS40,000 after convicting him of distributing *Al Bayader al-Siyasi* a magazine published in Jerusalem.

A military officer entered Shweiki's bookshop in the Bab Zawieh quarter, February 19, confiscated 100 copies of the bi-weekly and arrested Fawzi on charges of distributing 'banned' material.

Al Bayader does not have a license for distribution in the occupied territories, although it can be legally distributed inside the 1948 borders and Jerusalem.

Fawzi has been the correspondent for *Al Fajr* Arabic daily for 10 years.

School Teachers Prepare For General Teacher's Union

The General Committee of Government School Teachers set the groundwork this week for a union of all employees in the field of education.

In a statement issued after their regular weekly meeting, the Committee announced it will distribute to all schools and higher education institutes the internal regulations for a union which has been approved by the committee coordinating the various sectors within the education system. The union, which is expected to be officially established within the next few months, is designed as an umbrella organisation for a number of existing unions: the Union of University Employees, the Federation of UNRWA School Teachers, the Union of Private Schools Employees, higher institutes committees, and the Government School Teachers Committee.

Also discussed at the meeting, was the Israeli authorities' continued refusal to meet with teachers' representatives, despite an Israeli High Court recommendation which calls for that. A member of the committee told *Al Fajr* that the Israeli court made the recommendation in September 1982, which the teachers followed with a letter to the education officer, requesting a meeting. They never received an answer.

Government school teachers have organised for salary increases to cope with the inflation rate, promotions for eligible teachers, and a halt in unjustified transferring of teachers to remote areas.

Karim Nimr Saleh, 12, lies in hospital after being shot in the leg by Israeli settlers outside el-Bireh's Mughtaribeen Secondary School.

Palestinians Wounded, Schools Shut As W.B. Demonstrations Rage On

Three Palestinians were wounded by settlers' and soldiers' bullets and 13 Israelis were slightly injured in sporadic rock-throwing incidents in West Bank and Gaza Strip towns, villages and refugee camps, this week.

Seven schools in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron were closed as Israeli occupation authorities reacted to the demonstrations of students in these towns. Bethlehem and Hebron universities and the Polytechnic Vocational Institute in Hebron were also closed "until further notice." Sixty-eight shops were welded in Ramallah and Hebron and hundreds of students were summoned to military government headquarters in West Bank towns or tried and fined IS20,000 to IS80,000 on charges of demonstrating and stoning Israeli vehicles.

12-Year-Old Shot

The students of Mughtaribeen Secondary School in el-Bireh stoned an Israeli bus carrying settlers to Psgot settlement on Jabal Tawil, March 13. When a stone hit the window of the settlers' bus the driver stopped and three settlers chased students through el-Bireh's narrow streets. One settler opened fire at a student and injured Karim Nimr Saleh, 12, in his leg. Later Israeli soldiers broke into the Mughtaribeen school and threw tear gas bombs at the students. No more arrests were reported.

To curb demonstrations Israeli soldiers used a military helicopter for the first time. The helicopter hovered over the populated regions in the West Bank, watched areas where the residents demonstrated or attempted to demonstrate and called in military reinforcements. Soldiers in the helicopter also photographed demonstrators.

One resident in Hebron was arrested after being pictured using a sling-shot against soldiers. Israeli daily *Yediot Aharanot* reported, March 15, that the Israeli security authorities are studying the possibility of adding another infantry brigade to the five already serving in the West Bank. (Translations: the local press)

Settlers in Ramallah open fire on demonstrators last spring when over 20 Palestinians were killed in confrontations with Israeli soldiers and settlers. Clashes this week left numerous Palestinians wounded.

Shorts

New Military HQ In Al-Bireh

Israeli soldiers established a military position in a Palestinian-owned house located at the entrance of al-A'amari refugee camp, el-Bireh, March 16. The three-storey unfinished building has apparantly become a military headquarters and observation post ready to dispatch troops to put down demonstrations in Ramallah, el-Bireh and al-A'amari camp, whenever they occur.

For three days, last week, Israeli troops were seen transporting equipment into and building a security fence around the building. Residents of the city say that the Israelis took over the building in 1968, claiming it was being used by Palesstinian fighters as a hiding place. (Translation: Local papers, 17.3.83)

Galilee Demonstrators Arrested

Israeli police arrested five Palestinian youths from Arrabeh and Sakhnin, the Galilee, March 16, on charges of raising Palestinian flags in their villages. The arrests followed demonstrations and stone-throwing incidents in Arrabeh and Deir Hanna. According to Israel TV, two Egged busses had their windscreens broken by stones. The road to the nearby settlement of Harrarit was blocked with stones.

The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli police spokesperson as saying that the five youths had hoisted two Palestinian flags one on an electric pylon and the other on a mosque minaret in Sakhnin. They will also be charges with blocking the route to the settlement and damaging its reservoir, the spokesperson said.

FORUM FOR PALESTINIANS

At the United Nations assembly Asian governments agreed to hold a five day forum in Djakarta, Indonesia, starting May 9. The representatives of the Asian governments will discuss Israeli policy and its practices in the occupied territories, Asia and Palestine and to encourage countries to increse their solidarity with the Palestinian people, the situation in Jerusalem, the role of the PLO in developing the politics, the culture and the economy of the Palestinian people and the role of the UN in supporting the Palestinian people to gain their rights.

Another two forums will be held, one in Latin America and the other in North America, UN observers predict.

Carter Meets West Bank, Gaza Personalities

"Unfortunately the streets met him with stones," was how one Palestinian figure described for *Al Fajr* the visit of former US President Jimmy Carter to the occupied territories. The Palestinian figure, who declined to be identified, was among four individuals who attended a three-hour meeting with Carter on a "private" invitation from the American consulate. At the meeting, which was held at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem, were Ramallah lawyer Fuad Shehadeh, the Israeli-deposed mayor of el-Bireh, Ibrahim Tawil, Mustafa Natshe, acting-mayor of Hebron, and Farah A'araj, Israeli-appointed mayor of Beit Jala.

Two days earlier, the architect of the Camp David phased 'peace' agreement was received in Gaza by the military-appointed and later military-deposed mayor of Gaza, Rashad Shawwa, and landowner Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazaleh.

It was clear by the tens of demonstrations and strikes in the Palestinian cities that the people as well as the majority of the public figures and leaders were vehemently opposed to Carter's presence and what he represents. Carter's main achievement in the Middle East—the Camp David accords was unanimously rejected in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1978. The six who did agree to meet the American, however, claim they went to inform him personally of the situation in the occupied terrritories. 'We had to tell him that unless a solution is reached quickly there will be no land to negotiate about during his next visit," one of those who attended said.

Mustafa Natshe told *Al Fajr* that he presented the ex-US president with a memorandum about settlers' terrorist activity in his town. He also gave Carter his opinion of the Village Leagues and their disruptive role in the West Bank.

During his meeting with West Bank figures in Jerusalem, sources told *Al Fajr* that Carter had criticised the Palestinians for not joining the Camp David process. He insisted that the agreement between the Israeli and Egyptian governments "did not ignore the Palestinian people's rights," an opinion which several of the Palestinian figures disagreed with.

The Palestinian figures were in dispute among themselves on the political significance of their meeting. One of the small group, who also declined to be identified, said that Carter was touring the area in his new role as university professor and not as a political figure. He claimed that the invitations were 'private" and sent by the Consulate in East Jerusalem. Other figures disagreed with the statement. "Even a ping-pong team is a political delegation," Gaza lawyer Fayez Abu Rahmeh said. Abu Rahmeh, who is recovering from a recent heart attack and was unable to attend the meeting in Gaza, said that he does not think that it was wrong to hold meetings with former US presidents or any other foreign figures. Abu Rahmeh, chairman of the Gaza Lawyers Union, said that Carter specifically had injected his administration's foreign policy with the principle of human rights and that recognising the Palestinian people's right to self-determination was within that principle.

Dr. Haidar Abd al-Shafi, head of the Red Crescent Society and one of the most popular figures in the area, refused an invitation from Shawwa saying he does not consider a meeting with Carter fruitful. 'I think that it is in line with US policy to derive concessions from us on our basic rights," he said.

Carter's host in the Strip, Rashad Shawwa, refused to talk to *Al Fajr* because he said, the "newspaper had attacked the meeting before it took place."

Dr. Abu Ghazaleh, the only other Gazan to meet Carter and a frequent visitor to Egypt where he has recently held talks with Egyptian officials, also declined to talk to *Al Fajr* about the meeting.

Carter: The PLO Represents Most Palestinians

Former US President Jimmy Carter conceded that the Palestine Liberation Organisation does in fact represent 'most Palestinians" in press conference statements in Jerusalem, March 12. Carter's remarks came in response to a question posed by an *Al Fajr* (English) journalist about US avoidance of the PLO as a major factor in negotiations.

Carter, who said he was speaking as a private US citizen, said he had honoured the commitment made by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger not to speak to the PLO until it recognised UN resolution 242. In answer to another question as towhether he would have undertaken contacts if such a commitment had not been made Carter answered, "If the US administration before mine had intimate relations with the PLO I suppose I would have kept the same relationship." He noted, however, that he has met Palestinians, some of whom are members of the PLO, on his current Middle East tour.

The former US President expressed mild contempt for the Israeli-backed Village Leagues. He told reporters he did not believe they represented Palestinians. According to *The Jerusalem Post* reports, Carter was "snookered" into meeting a Village League leader during a meeting at the Kiryat Gat municipality.

During his six-day stay in the area Carter met Bethlehem mayor Elias Freij, Hebron's acting-mayor Mustafa Natshe, deposed mayors of Gaza and el-Bireh, Rashad Shawwa and Ibrahim Tawil, and Ramallah lawyer Fuad Shehadeh.

Carter left, March 13, for Jordan where he plans to hold talks with King Hussein. In a later parts of his tour he is expected to be received by the Saudi, Syrian and Lebanese heads of state.

There were violent protests in all parts of the occupied territories during Carter's presence in the area. Scores of people were arrested following anti-Carter demonstrations.

Holes for Smuggling Weapons Found Near Al-Aqsa Mosque

Several holes were discovered in the southern wall of al-Aqsa mosque, March 12, by construction engineers of the restoration department of the mosque. Islamic *waqf* spokesmen believe that the right-wing religious groups who planned to occupy the mosque last week made these holes in attempts to smuggle weapons into the compound. The *waqf* contacted Meir Dov, head of excavations around al-Aqsa and demanded he cement the holes. The *waqf* institute announced that its architecture department will continue working to close them. In a letter, sent to the Israeli authorities the same day, the *waqf* demanded that the names of those behind last Friday's sabotage act be revealed and that the identification of those organisations behind it be revealed.

Saad al-Din Alami, head of the *waqf* said in his letter to the minister of the police that the Israeli authorities are responsible for "what happened and is still happening to al-Aqsa mosque." Alami said that if the bomb placed in Bab al-Majlis Street near the mosque on March 4 had exploded it "would have been disastrous." The quarter is densely populated.

Hassan Tahboub, director of the *waqf*, asked guards at the mosque to be extra vigilant.

Issam Awad, the *waqf* engineer, dismissed the idea that the settlers wanted to infiltrate the mosque through the holes. He said the settlers planned to put explosive material in the holes and to take control of the mosque during the chaos after it was detonated.

In his technical report on the openings, he wrote that a cave, adjacent to the mosque's third gate, bears marks made by digging tools on its plastered walls. People wanted to discover whether there was a tunnel behind it, he said. He also discovered a hole at the base of the cave leading to a channel connecting it to a stable under the mosque.

Holes inside Old City walls near Al-Aqsa mosque, intended for use by Israeli settlers to smuggle in weapons.

continued from page 1

MOSQUE ATTEMPT

spokesman for the Islamic *waqf* committee which is responsible for the mosque and its surroundings, said that the attempt is part of a continuing attack on al-Aqsa, Islam's third holiest shrine. "According to the IV Geneva Convention the occupying power, in this case Israel, is responsible for defending holy places in the occupied territory," he said. Abd al-Kader said the authorities' lack of response to previous attacks represented a 'green light' for more assaults.

As news of the settler raid spread the next morning, thousands of Palestinians flocked to the mosque in a show of solidarity and readiness to defend it from attack. It was estimated that more than 10,000 attended Friday prayers.

Israeli soldiers carrying rifles were posted on rooftops all the way between Damascus Gate and the mosque. Several units of 10 men plus a dog patrolled the partially closed alleys. Several dozen police were posted outside the Damascus and Herods Gates.

Despite all the precautionary measures there was a small demonstration from al-Aqsa mosque after prayers finished. It was short-lived and three demonstrators were arrested.

There have been over 200 separate attempts to break into the mosque since 1977 according to *waqf* records. Last April an Israeli soldier stormed the mosque. In the incident two died and almost 60 were wounded. Alan Goodman, the soldier, who carries a US passport, was charged with killing one person and wounding several others.

An Israeli policeman conducts Rabbi Yisrael Ariel and another suspect into Jerusalem Magistrates Court after Israeli settlers were arrested for attempting a takeover of al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

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Language Problem

On the eve of March 11 a group of Zionist settlers which included Israeli military personnel, were caught minutes before they attempted to sabotage Al Aqsa mosque Only 43 lunatics were detained. On March 15, Palestinian residents of the Old City psychologically prepared themselves for a similar surprise attack while watching about 200 armed settlers roaming sinisterly through the narrow Old City streets.

The past 16 years of Israeli occupation of Jerusalem have witnessed hundreds of attacks varying only in size and ferocity on Islam's third holiest shrine. The only defenders so far have been Palestinian civilians armed with the will to protect and to defend their human, social and religious rights. But this alone is not and has never been enough.

With no faith in Israel ever abiding by the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the protection of a civilian population under occupation, Palestinians have learned they must protect themselves and their holy religious shrines unaided.

Despite all the empty talk about their concern, the Arab countries and their ruling regimes cannot and will not save the holiest shrine from destruction. Only in a PLO led independent Palestinian state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital can Palestinians feel safe, secure, protected and free.

US Ambassador to the UN Jeanne Kirkpatrick, read aloud Ronald Reagan's message to the Zionist' conference held in Jerusalem this week. Reagan used the occasion to state his and his government's concern about the "just cause of the Soviet Jews." Kirkpatrick maintained that the denial of rights of Soviet Jews to preserve their cultural and religious heritage is a clear violation of international law

If this was an honest, principled and basic stand of the US, then the Palestinian people deprived of their human, social and national rights must expect Ronald Reagan and his administration to shout out loud in the face of the Palestinians' oppressors. Palestinians would expect some action to be taken against the perpetrators of these violations. That is, if the US administration consider the Palestinian people part of the human race.

But it would be foolish to have any such expectation. The US administration understands only one language and can see only through one channel that of its interests and profit making. Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims all over the world should deal with the US in the language and through the channels it understands. When US interests in these countries are at stake, then it might start to see human rights.'

WHY ITALY'S CHIEF WON'T BE IN AMMAN

Special to Al Fajr

ROME The official reason for the postponement of Italian President Sandro Pertini's visit to Amman, scheduled to start Wednesday March 16, was that King Hussein would probably have to go to London as the head of the Arab League's seven-man committee. But furious reaction in Amman and Rome, and possibly also in Washington indicated that the real reason is different and one seriously damaging to Palestinian interests. Pertini, along with Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo, was also scheduled to meet with PLO chairman Yassir Arafat while in Amman. An interview by PLO representative in Rome, Nimr Hammad, which appeared in the Italian daily *La Republica* on Saturday, March 12, prematurely disclosed the scheduled meeting and attributed goals to it which are in clear contrast to PNC resolutions. In fact, the interview may have caused a missed opportunity. Moreover, the cancellation of Pertini's visit to Amman has automatically cancelled the president's scheduled stop-over in Beirut which could have had a positive effect for the situation of the Palestinian population in the Lebanese capital and had been carefully prepared with that in mind. The fact that the excuse for the cancellation is nothing more than a diplomatic fig leaf is confirmed by the dates of the scheduled London meeting. The King's departure for London will only take place, March 18, by which time the Pertini-Hussein talks would have been over.

The Pertini-Colombo-Arafat meeting should have taken place almost by accident thanks to the chairman s presence in the Jordanian capital for other reasons. This should have made it easier to overcome obstacles such as what is called nowadays the "Beirut trauma" of Arab heads of state the fear of experiencing a take-over of their capitals by the PLO leadership. The King s susceptibility is said to be particularly heightened by the suspicion that the announcement, which presented the Italian president's trip to Amman as aimed more to meet Arafat than to return a state visit effected some time ago by the Jordanian monarch, has been inspired by the PLO chairman s presence. This, moreover, comes at a time when the PNC's refusal to delegate representation power to the King to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians has deeply disappointed him.

No less irritation has been provoked, however, in the Italian ministry of foreign affairs and in Washington, by the disclosures made in the same interview concerning an alleged role of mediation between the PLO and the US which would have been entrusted to Italian diplomacy. This would be a reversal of the PNC resolutions and would leave the PLO to a *de facto* acceptance of the Reagan plan.

Arab and Palestinian circles here point out that at this delicate and important phase of the political struggle in the post-Beirut era Palestinian diplomacy must be up to the tasks ahead and in harmony with the collective aspirations of the Palestinian people.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CARTER IN AMMAN

Former US President Jimmy Carter is continuing his Middle East trip and has arrived in Amman from the occupied territories by crossing the Allenby bridge.

No doubt Carter has arrived in Amman with the great hope of being able to convince King Hussein to join the US "peace process ' in the region after this process reached a dead-end because of Egyptian and Israeli differences of opinion over the interpretation of 'self-rule ' or "autonomy" and Israeli determination to regard it as a continuation of the existing situation.

Today after everyone has come to realise that the Camp David accords have failed to achieve a comprehensive settlement and have even fallen short of being a separate settlement between Egypt and Israel, Washington believes that the Lebanese war has opened up new horizons in the region. These may make the question of "other parties" joining the process a possibility, saving it from the stalemate it has reached.

Against this background, Carter arrived in Egypt and Israel, met with some personalities in the West Bank and Gaza strip; and here he is nowadays continuing his endeavour in Amman. Will he succeed in persuading Hussein to join the negotiations?

It is almost certain that King Hussein cannot agree to join this process as long as two basic conditions are unfulfilled. First he requires a "serious commitment " from Israel and the US that anything attained by "joining" the negotiations will provide him with the opportunity to participate in the process without arousing the anger of his people and the Arab nation, and without recording him in history as one who went along the path of Sadat and conceded the rights of the Palestinian people. Second, he must be given the 'green light ' by the Palestinians to afford him the opportunity of furthering political work.

As far as the first point is concerned, all indications are that Israel is not prepared to concede anything basic to Jordan and that the possibility of obtaining a "serious commitment" from Israel is almost non-existent, no matter how many envoys the US sends to the region, be they former presidents or former "Arabs" who come to resurrect the accords so that they can enter into history through its widest doors.

As for the second point, the matter is extremely simple: the PNC, in its sixteenth session held in Algiers last month, asserted that the Arab peace plan, 'the Fez plan" is the minimum for any political action to solve the problem. Coordination with Jordan is something desirable, but the idea of a federal union with Jordan is not a subject for discussion except after establishing a Palestinian state.

Thus , the Palestinian 'green light" cannot be given to King Hussein except in return for an independent Palestinian state on national soil and this state's decision, through its democratic institutions, to form a federal union with Jordan.

As long as a "serious committment" is not forthcoming (and even if it were, it is certain that it would be less than the Palestinian "green light" demands), it is obvious that both conditions do not provide King Hussein with the possibility of joining the American process"

Thus King Hussein may distance himself from this process. If, despite all this, he does join, it will provoke more than suspicion and more than one question.

OPINION

ARENS TARGETS DAMASCUS

"Arens: The IDF may inflict a preventive military blow on Syria, if it threatens Israeli security." This was the front page headline on February 23 in *Maariv* evening paper. It carried an interview given to *The Los Angeles Times* by Moshe Arens, before the new defense minister even made it back to Israel.

So far, this was the most explicit declaration of intentions of the Likud government concerning the conclusions and lessons it drew from the Lebanon war. Just as Sharon was put in office in July 1981 in order to carry out the Lebanese adventure that caused unbelievable destruction, Arens is heading to Damascus. Arens wasted no time at all and opened his war campaign while assuming his new post. As the high political price the government is paying and in view of the difficulties Israel is facing in Lebanon, it concluded that with or without (Chief of Staff) Eitan with (ex-commander of Beirut) Yaron or without him · · it must break Syria's military force, in order to 'reap the benefits of the war.'

Just as the missile crisis in April 1981 was the pretext that opened the previous campaign, so this time, the missiles that are posed not near the Israeli border, but in Damascus, are presented as a threat to Israel.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens visits Israeli soldiers in Lebanon. Next stop Damascus?

However, in view of explicit Israeli intentions of attacking the Syrian capital, it is obvious that the missiles were placed there in order to defend Damascus and not to threaten Tel Aviv. As always, behind Israeli threats, you can find the Americans. In a news dispatch in *Yediot Ahronot*, Pentagon sources said that the Soviet missiles "constitute a threat to any supersonic plane that operates in the area, as well as to the American sixth fleet vessels. *The Los Angeles Times* too had screaming headlines such as "Moscow will operate satellites to help the Syrians."

These declarations ignore the simple fact that right now it is the American Marines who, thousands of miles from their home, are stationed in the vicinity of the Syrian border, and that it is Damascus that is in the range of Israeli cannons.

Reacting to Arens' arrogant declarations, the Syrians made it clear that they are ready to withdraw from Lebanon on the condition that Israel does so too. The Syrian minister of information said that his country 'has no interest in war, but if war is imposed on it, it will fight back with all its might, and it won't stand alone.' *(Al Hamishmar 25. 2.83)*

In view of all the declarations and published statements concerning ongoing military preparations, there is no doubt that we are very close to a renewed war. Israel has already made it clear that it has no intention of withdrawing from Lebanon, which in and of itself constitutes a grave indication that it is planning to advance eastward and northward.

The extent of the Israeli provocations, today, go beyond the borders of the area. In view of the American presence in the area, and the aid that Moscow has to provide for the defence needs of Damascus, Arens' words may not materialise into a 'preventive' military operation, but more likely, in an overall war, whose results, a short-sighted person like him cannot predict. (Translated from *Derech Hanitzotz*, 1.3.83)

THE GREAT HOUR OF DEMOCRACY?

When the results of the commission of inquiry became known, a big cry was heard echoing inside Israel and abroad: "This is the great hour of Israeli democracy." For one faction (Labour) this claim became a horse to ride on all the way to power. The other faction (Likud) used it to erase the conclusions of the inquiry commission, and hold on to power.

However, those who are ready to study the conclusions of the inquiry commission without bias, can draw one logical lesson: In a true democracy, under a regime that regards all people regardless of their religion, race and sex as equals, Sabra and Shatila could have never occurred.

The massacre of Sabra and Shatila is the continuation of the massacre at Deir Yassin. Just as the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime, Israel repeats its actions after 35 years. In the same way they tried in 1948 to hide the real facts from public scrutiny and condemn them to oblivion in the name of establishing "the only democracy in the Middle East' they are trying to do it again.

Deir Yassin, Kibya, Kufur Qassem, Sabra and Shatila - these are the rule not the exception. They were carried out intentionally. They were carefully planned and carried out meticulously. For that purpose, they established a headquarters to which they brought their best specialists who followed the developments in Sabra and Shatila closely.

The apathy and stupefaction that the Israeli government was blamed of by the commission, does not characterise the Likud only. They truly reflect the indifference of Zionism in general to the life, welfare and future of the Palestinian Arab people.

Zionism's attitude to the Palestinians is a racist one resulting in wars such as the Lebanon war with its consequences. In 'Israeli democracy' there is no room for the Arabs. Neither is there room for workers, for Oriental Jews, slum-dwellers or the elderly. In "Israeli democracy' there is no room for anti-war militants, or conscientious objectors, or all those who strive to build a Jewish-Arab fraternity. But above all, 'Israeli democracy" is based on the negation of most elementary rights of another people: the right to self-determination of the Palestinians, which is the

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AN AFTERNOON AT THE HAMRA CINEMA

by Francois Abu Salem and Francine Gaspar

I come out, amazed, dismayed, frozen in mind as well as body. Everyone has left it singly: audience, actors . . . a crew is striking the set, kicking it without any consideration. The 'sets' are painted false stones and wooden benches, and three fir tree branches that were supposed to make us penetrate into the atmosphere of the countryside, the "village". What has happened? What has happened to us? In 1983, after the war in Lebanon, after Sabra and Shatila, what means do we need to express our reality? Because our reality cannot possibly be that, this level of mediocrity. · · ·

Military Order 1015,1039 .....in West Bank Farming Economy

by Daoud Kuttab

Early in 1983, copies of a new military order were distributed to West Bank attorneys. The order, number 1015, was signed July 27, 1982 by the then-head of the 'civil administration' branch of the Israeli military occupation authorities, Professor Menachem Milson. It is unknown why making the order public was delayed.

The military order, which was later amended by order 1039, dated January 5, 1983, strictly controls the planting of fruit-bearing trees in the West Bank without the permission of the Israeli officer in charge of agriculture in the West Bank's 'civil administration.'

Al-Ouja banana crop

1015

Order 1015, which was co-signed by Uri Orr, Israeli commander of the central district, "forbids anyone to transfer plants or to graft fruit-bearing trees without the written permission of the authorities." The order goes on to say that the proper authorities, appointed by the head of the civil administration', have the right, along with their employees, to enter any land in order to enforce the law.

Violators of the new law are to be punished with a one year jail term or IS15,000 (US $450) or both. If the individual continues to violate this new order, he has to pay an additional IS500 fine for every day he continues to 'commit the crime'. The new order delegates the power to the local prosecutor to uproot the illegally planted trees and to bill the landowner for uprooting expenses.

1039

Soon after order 1015 was made public, it was amended by a new military order 1039 restricting farmers from planting pulses without a permit. Violators are punished as in order 1015.

Palestinian farmers in the West Bank have not been directly informed of the new military order. To date, the only public mention of the order has come in the East Jerusalem weekly *Al Talia* which is banned from distribution in the rest of the West Bank. Agriculture department officials in Jericho, where farmers could be severely affected, were unaware of the regulation. A source in the department, who asked not to be identified, told *Al Fajr*, "normally we are notified and even consulted beforehand regarding any changes, but so far we have not heard anything."

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According to military order 47, which was issued in the first months of Israeli occupation, agricultural products are not to be exported to Israel without a permit. The order, which bans export even to Arab Jerusalem, reads as follows:

'Just before a certain agricultural product is ripe for harvesting and marketing, the Israeli officer in charge of agriculture in the West Bank and a representative of the relevant Israeli marketing board (the Israeli Fruit Board for example) visit the field. They test the crop to decide upon the quality of the produce and the time of its maturation. Then, depending on the assessment of the representative of the Israeli marketing board, the officer determines what quantity of the produce may be allowed into the Israeli market. Having established this quota, he issues permits to West Bankers who wish to export their products to Israel. Each permit states the time when this product will be allowed into Israel, the amount that may be exported by that farmer, the name of the Israeli wholesale market to which it may be sold, and a description of the truck which is to transport it. Patrols are then instructed to keep the roads under surveillance and to seize all vehicles exporting any product without a permit or contrary to any of the terms laid down in the export permit.

"No restrictions are placed on Israeli producers intending to sell in the West Bank. Thus the West Bank becomes a protected market, located conveniently close to Israeli manufac urers and farmers, into which it is also possible to dump excess products."

BZU graduation

The Unemployment of Palestinian University Graduates

by Awad Abdel Fattah

The unemployment of Palestinian university graduates is one of the most serious problems confronting West Bank institutions of higher education. The problem has been increasing over the last 10 years. The problem of graduate unemployment is not new; it has grown more serious now that West Bank universities themselves graduate Palestinian students.

Every year, hundreds of graduates complete their studies, but most of them do not know what to do with their degrees. On most construction sites in Israel one will find graduates. Other students take work not connected to their specialities. Many are forced to emigrate.

Graduates Surveyed

The question of the graduates has been the subject of several surveys. These surveys have succeeded to define the extent of the problem but comprehensive, accurate figures and statistics are not available due to the absence of reliable statistical models for the West Bank.

According to an initial study conducted by the Arab Studies Centre in Jerusalem, there were 650 unemployed university graduates at the end of 1982. A study by the Arab Graduates Club registered 350 unemployed graduates. But Doctor Abdallah Sabri, secretary of the Club, told *Al Fajr* that they estimate this figure to be approximately one-third of the total.

According to another study by Dr. Qustandi Shomali, a lecturer at Bethlehem University, figures show that 25 percent of the 352 students who graduated from the university in the last three years could not find jobs. But Dr. Shomali remarked that this does not mean that the remaining 75 percent are working in their majors. "You might find a sociologist teaching in a primary school, writing for a newspaper or even working in construction," he said. His study shows that at least 25 percent of Bethlehem University graduates leave the country each year.

Compiled research and studies in progress refer to the fact that most of the jobs available are for professionals, such as nurses and administrators, while graduates in other fields such as sociology, Middle East studies or education find it difficult to get jobs.

Background of the Problem

The job market in the West Bank breaks down into three sectors. The first is the government sector, over which Palestinians have no authority. The second, the private sector, includes companies, commercial stores and some hospitals. This sector is subject to the law of profit and loss according to which new employees are hired. The third sector is comprised of national institutions and projects such as charitable and cooperative societies, unions and sports clubs, with which institutions of higher education can cooperate in regards to employing graduates. However, the potential of these institutions is limited.

According to Taysir Maswadi, research coordinator at the Arab Studies Centre, about 40 percent of last year's graduates found jobs 90 percent of them outside the West Bank.

Occupation and Lack of Planning

Most Palestinians attribute the problem of unemployment to two basic factors. The political conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the lack of scientific planning by the universities. Doctor Sabri said that there is no balance between the number of graduates and the needs of Palestinian society. He explained that the universities do not try to distribute specialities in accordance with the needs of the society. Taking Bir Zeit as example, he said, "you find that 40 percent of the graduates in Bir Zeit study Arabic while less than 110 percent study English." As a result, schools will suffer a shortage of English teachers, while there is a surplus of Arabic language teachers.

Dr. Shomali said that the lack of opportunities is due to the absence of industrial or development projects. According to him, this is not the fault of the university. There is a lack of development projects because there is no authority in the West Bank to plan and sponsor them in order to absorb graduates, he explained.

Lessons of the Vietnamese Struggle

Phan Thi Minh, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Rome, talks to *Al Fajr's* Livia Rokach about the lessons learned from the victory of a Third World nation over US military might

Exclusive to Al Fajr

Fifteen years ago, in February 1968, as the rising moon announced the *Tet*, or New Year, over a land occupied by over half a million American troops, Vietnamese guerrillas softly stepping out from nowhere flung open the fortified gates of the US embassy in the center of Saigon, occupied the massive building which had become, for the entire world, the symbol of imperialist power and conquest, and hoisted on its roof the red flag with the five-point yellow star of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

World public opinion was stunned. The American public, informed only shortly beforehand that the Vietnamese people s resistance had been decimated began to understand that no military power, however forceful and sophisticated, can crush the will of a people convinced of the justice of their cause and fighting united for freedom and independence. Five years later, on January 27, 1973, the US government was also forced to accept this conviction, after its last minute attempts to bring Vietnam to its knees when the 1972 Xmas bombings failed. The Paris Agreements signed on that date formally declared American recognition of the rights of the Vietnamese people to freedom, independence and the unification of their country. On March 30, 1973, the armed forces of the major world power retreated from the land of a small, Third World peasant nation whose determination to win a just, meaningful peace for itself and for all humanity had formed the political conscience of an entire generation everywhere around the globe.

Fifteen years after the *Tet* offensive, 10 years after the Paris Agreements and the US retreat, what lessons have the Vietnamese people drawn from the history of their long and successful struggle? .....

.....

Phan Thi Minh, today the ambassador of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Vietnam to Rome, is 58 years old. The granddaughter of a Vietnamese intellectual and patriot who spent years in the notorious colonial French prison on the desert island of Poulo Condor and was later exiled to France, the daughter of resisters, she entered the clandestine struggle against the French colonial occupation at the age of 15. A combatant and youth leader in the ranks of the students' movement in the Danang area, in central Vietnam, during the resistance against the French, a resistance organiser in the countryside, in the liberated zones, and in the lion's den of Saigon, she lived through mass bombings and mass arrests, through vast devastation and the suffering of an entire people.

Elected a senior member of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam and later designated to participate in the Paris negotiations, (incidentally, alongside her celebrated first cousin Nguyen Thi Binh, the PRG's Minister of Foreign Affairs) she was to endure for years a separation from her family: her husband continued popular struggle inside Vietnam; her very young daughter was deposited, with all related risks with relatives in Saigon.

We found Phan Thi Minh extremely well-informed on Middle East and Palestinian realities, in the best Vietnamese political tradition. And, also in the best Vietnamese political tradition, as reluctant to impart "lessons of struggle" to other peoples or other revolutionary movements. But the lesson is objectively there and Phan Thi Minh readily agreed to talk to *Al Fajr's* readers about it, while sending them and all the Palestinians who share the faith in the struggle for a better future and a better world, and especially to all Palestinians under occupation, her and the Vietnamese people s warmest solidarity and greetings.

Al Fajr: Fifteen years after the *Tet* offensive, ten years after the Paris Agreements, eight years after the final victory, what is your evaluation of the "secret arms" which permitted the Vietnamese people, a Third World peasant nation, to win over the first world power, its gigantic, sophisticated, technological war machine, and chase it away, together with its regional puppets?

A: I believe the first element of our victory is that the struggle lay in the existence of a very strong leadership who, through profound and constant ties with the popular masses guided all the activities of the struggle towards victory. To make war one must be extremely well-organised. It is not easy. To lead men and women into battle to sacrifice is an undertaking that must never be carried out light-heartedly.

It is necessary to organise things in such a way as to cause as much damage as possible to the enemy and as little damage as possible to one s own ranks. Sacrifice should be accepted only when absolutely necessary. This should never be forgotten. We were fortunate enough to have a leader like Ho Chi Minh for our country and our people, and a leadership operating with him from the beginning of the struggle, who kept these basic principles firm. In this way, and with a second element 'secret armament" if you wish — we achieved the organisation of our struggle, a fundamental factor.

With experience, we learned that an isolated people — and it must be recalled that when we started our struggle we were totally isolated from the rest of the world — must mobilize the entire population of the country, all its human resources. We realized that it was necessary that every peasant every citizen, every intellectual, every man and woman, should become conscious of the need to struggle, and enter the struggle fully convinced of this need. This became the major force on which our struggle was based. At first, this was understood instinctively. Then, with time and experience, we analysed what was happening, drew conclusions from it, and proceeded to formulate a synthesis on which the practice was based. On one hand, the intimate conviction of the people in regard to the need for struggle was achieved. At the same time, we drew the conclusion that it was necessary to conduct the struggle simultaneously on both the military and the political levels.

Al Fajr: How did you apply this conclusion in practice?

A: On the military level, it was only in a very advanced stage of the struggle that we constituted regular units. But from the very start we applied the method of the guerilla. The guerilla war was carried out by groups of peasants who were at one and the same time combatants and food-producers. Many of these groups entered into action and became combatants only when the moment came for them to do so. When the enemy came to your home, everybody, including the women, and in their way even the children, became combatants. In this way, the military struggle became a struggle of the entire population, that is, also a political struggle. And if the enemy was always, materially speaking, enormously stronger than we were, it was defeated because it found itself to be fighting against the entire population, not just against another army but against a whole people which was determined to achieve its goals and was united around an energetic and farsighted leadership. This disoriented the enemy, they couldn t understand it, they couldn t understand what they were doing, and this was how their defeat began.

Al Fajr: How was the unity of the people around the leadership achieved?

A: Through permanent discussion. Through in-depth persuasion which was the result of a long process of reciprocal education and relationship-building. It was not achieved from one day to another. First, under the French occupation, there were many who detested the occupier, but they felt impotent, so when they got to know that new prospects for a resistance existed under a leadership, they joined and threw themselves into the struggle.

Little by little as they found themselves facing negative events, or persecution, or acts of repression, they engaged in the work of explanation and discussion. Throughout the war this process continued. Every event on the local level was analysed and the conclusions drawn, with the participation of the entire population.

For example, when a dangerous situation was felt to threaten a certain village, or there were unforeseen events there, a meeting of the whole village population was called, and the situation discussed. How to react? What to do? Each person expressed ideas and explained how the situation should be confronted. The suggestions were put together, analysed, and, at the end, the solution the way out, would be drawn up. This method was used on all levels, from that of the village to that of the leadership: discussion, analysis, decision. This forged the political ties from downward up, in a constant work of concrete, local decisions. At the same time, from the leadership down there was an influx of suggested explanations that came from persons who had a larger vision of developments in all their complexity and who illuminated us on how the single issues were situated in the context of the international situation. This put us in a better situation to understand exactly how matters stood and the meaning of events or situations in a certain part of the country in relation to the more general picture.

Phan Thi Minh

The lessons drawn from the blows we suffered "rendered our activities more clandestine and more efficient."

Al Fajr: How could this work be constantly carried out under the occupation, in conditions of strict control?

A: It was always necessary to develop all kinds of activities, to invent clandestine activities, to develop ways and means of clandestine organisation. Already, under the French occupation, there was an absolute total control over the population, in every village, in each hamlet. But the revolutionary organisations and movements developed all the same, from 1920 on. And the activities became stronger as of 1930, when all the movements and organisations entered into the framework of the initiatives launched by the newly formed Communist Party of Indo-China, led by Ho Chi Minh. There were cases in which our activities were discovered, and many people were arrested, tortured, massacred; there were blows inflicted and difficulties imposed. But the lessons were drawn from these blows and difficulties so as to make us increasingly more capable, shrewd and vigilant, to render our activities more clandestine and also more efficient.

Al Fajr: You hinted at the role that a constant analysis of the international situation played in the advancement of the struggle...

A: Yes, I believe that thanks to this constant analysis and our awareness at every moment of the global nature of the situation within which we were conducting our struggle, we were able to seize upon the possibilities opening to us to understand the real nature of the situation and launch our initiatives at exactly the right moments, neither vainly anticipating nor missing the right occasions. Thanks to this constant effort at understanding the international situation, we could really count on our own forces and use them when success was better secured, in moments which were actually decisive.

However, this too was something we learned from experience, and not always did everything depend on us. For example, you ll remember that at the time of the Geneva Agreements (1954) we were deprived of the advantages that we had obtained on the battlefield, and which were not fully reflected in those agreements. At that time we could free the entire country from the military point of view. But at that time our analysis and perception of the international situation were limited, our information insufficient. The Chinese profited from this fact to pretend to represent us and indirectly negotiated with the French in our name, so as to prevent us from obtaining what we were entitled to obtain — the liberation of our entire country.

This opened the way for the Americans to come in later, and the story is well known. But we learned the lesson, and the 1973 Paris Agreements were the result of a negotiation process conducted by ourselves from the very start and throughout. The situation changed completely. We took our destiny in our hands and opened the negotiations with the Americans despite the Chinese request that we should refuse to negotiate and even their accusations that we were "betraying the cause of South Vietnam." Well, as everybody knows, things turned out differently.

Al Fajr: Why did you open the negotiations when you did? What were the decisive considerations in favour of opening the negotiations?

A This is a crucial question. It is always necessary to negotiate from a position of force, never from weakness It is necessary to open negotiations only when one has the right cards in one's hands, so as to get the enemy to accept the essential objectives for the achievement of which we have been struggling. If we had opened the negotiations before 1968, the results would have been very different than those expressed in the Paris Agreements. It was only after the *Tet* offensive, when we had shown the Americans with concrete evidence that even with over half a million of their troops in Vietnam they could not expect to be able to control the situation; that even with half a million GI's in place we could enter Saigon and that we were determined to do so; only then, could we afford to offer them negotiations and they were forced to accept them.

At that point, our struggle acquired one more dimension. We continued to move on various fronts: on the military front inside the country on the political front inside the country, on the political front on the international level and on the diplomatic front *vis-a-vis* our enemy. It was necessary to choose the propitious moment for the opening of the negotiations in order to prevent the enemy from escalating militarily, and even to force him to de-escalate. In this way unnecessary sacrifices could be prevented for our population, for our combatants — and also for the enemy. And this produced results which conformed not only to our own wishes but also to those of world public opinion, thus amplifying the consent around us and diminishing the support given to the enemy.

Al Fajr: Some analysts have ultimately judged the *Tet* offensive as a "military failure transformed into a political success." Fifteen years later, how do you evaluate this issue?

A. The very long struggle of our people was consciously conceived as a process in which we were to advance step by step. The *Tet* offensive was, in this context, a very big step. It was the first time that Saigon came for some time under the control of our combatants. Later, we withdrew, but much remained. What remained was the fact that we were able to do it, with the support of the entire population and thanks to our combatants, despite and against the huge US military installations operating in South Vietnam, the fortified roadblocks all around Saigon, the "security belt" around the city for the building of which forests had been destroyed, villages razed, populations forcefully evacuated — so as to prevent us from coming near. Despite all this, we made it, and this was for us a very important success against the US army and that of the (Nguyen Van) Thieu puppet regime. And after the withdrawal we continued to fight, and the offensive we launched three years later was on a much larger scale.

Al Fajr: In fact, at that point the US invaded Laos and Cambodia, and thus went straight towards defeat...

A: Yes. At first the US concentrated their forces on Vietnam. When they realised that the solidarity between the peoples and resistance movements of the region prevented their victory in Vietnam they thought that by destroying that solidarity and the bases of the resistance in the neighbouring countries, they could win. In this way they got themselves involved in new adventures and dug their own grave.

Al Fajr: On the eve of the Paris Agreements and at the moment of their signature, many, among whom were no few friends of the Vietnamese people's struggle, claimed that the Vietnamese resistance had renounced its traditional strategic objectives and had accepted a solution whereby South Vietnam would remain detached from the Republic of Democratic Vietnam and governed autonomously by an administration made up of "three components," including the PRG but also the Thieu party. This impression was drawn from the proposals — the famous 10-point and 8-point programmes — of the PRG itself. In reality, however, would you say that those proposals reflected the capacity of the Vietnamese resistance to show extreme tactical flexibility while never renouncing, in fact, the most firm strategic steadfastness?

A: Yes. To enter into negotiations did not mean for us to abandon the objectives of our struggle, but on the contrary, to obtain the latter. In fact the first paragraph of the Paris Agreements affirmed the US recognition of all our rights as a free sovereign and independent people and our right to the reunification of our country — these were precisely the goals of our struggle. After that if the Thieu government had not violated, with US support, the agreements by refusing to liberate all prisoners, by conducting military attacks against the liberated zones, etc., there would have been a transitional government made up of three components and then free elections would have been held. But the Saigon regime's obstinate sabotage of the agreements which, however, did not come to us as a surprise — blocked all possibilities for a peaceful transition and then we had to lead the country to the final victory through military means.

Our strategic goal was that of the independence, the freedom and the reunification of the country, and at a longer range, the construction of socialism in Vietnam. Our tactic consisted in making every effort to achieve these goals through peaceful means, and at the same time to have the capacity, in case the peaceful way proved impossible, to realise our right and duty to these goals through military means. The tactic was a means to achieve the strategic goals. I believe that every liberation movement and every revolutionary movement must define its fundamental strategic goals in a very clear, and unequivocal way, after which, on the basis of this, it can be most flexible in the choice of tactics. An important part of it in our case however, was that the masses, the population, were always precisely informed of all this, the people received full information and knew exactly how to evaluate the developments in the light of this distinction. They were not left in doubt as to the final goals of the struggle, also on the diplomatic level, and therefore the leadership could have the staunch support and confidence of the masses in its efforts on all levels.

Al Fajr: The Vietnamese struggle had a very special feature characterising it: It aimed at one and the same time at achieving national independence and freedom — and realizing a socialist revolution. It is to date the only example of a victorious national liberation struggle in the Third World led by a Communist party. Since the ultimate revolutionary goals of your movement were never masked or hidden, how did you succeed all the same in consolidating national unity, comprising all social classes around you?

A: The first answer to this is that the oppression exercised by the occupation, (the French, and later the American) was hated by all, without class distinction, and it was widely realised that only a strong, unified resistance, deeply rooted among the popular masses and guided by a strong and intelligent leadership, could put an end to it. A second answer is that we in Vietnam never had much of a bourgeoisie anyway. The mainstay of the resistance was on one hand, the intellectuals, the professionals who also had their roots in the peasant society and at the same time couldn t stand to see national independence and dignity trampled on by the foreign, colonial occupation which exploited and oppressed all the layers of society.

Take my family: My father, who was a university professor, my mother who was a teacher, other relatives who were likewise intellectuals and professionals, earned their living well under the occupation, but they joined the revolutionary struggle right from the start. My grandfather, who was a patriot and a resister, a political prisoner for many years at Poulo Condor, joined Ho Chi Minh when both were exiles in Paris. This is quite a common

example. At the same time, it must be added that the basic culture of Vietnamese peasant society was anything but hostile to the idea of a socialist society. On the contrary, our ancient culture contained traditional and inherent elements of socialism, and the ideals of a socialist revolution, which, especially when blended by Ho Chi Minh with those of national independence, were something familiar, acceptable, natural for the people; there was nothing alien or strange about them.

In fact, this was the very reason for American aggression as (former President Dwight) Eisenhower revealed in his memoires when he wrote that the US intervened in Vietnam because there was no doubt that if free elections were to be held, as prescribed by the Geneva Agreements, a crushing majority of the people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh's party. Later this was reconfirmed by the Pentagon Papers.

Al Fajr: Throughout its long struggle, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam refused to join the United Nations or to accept initiatives promoted by it. Why?

A: When we started our struggle, the UN was controlled exclusively by the US. It had played a very negative role in the conflicts of Korea, Guinea, Congo and Palestine. It never once expressed condemnation for the US aggression against Vietnam. Our view was that the UN is not a community of peoples but a grouping of governments. The UN can certify the independence of a people after the achievement by that people, through struggle of its independence. But it cannot, and never has, helped a people to actually achieve it. In some cases, such as Palestine, it has actually dispossessed a people of its land, sovereignty and independence. What we aimed at, and needed, was the support of the peoples, and we achieved it, outside of the UN.

Al Fajr: In fact, the Vietnamese resistance always made a point of distinguishing between peoples and governments and also in the case of enemy: the US. It thus achieved one of its major successes on the political front the anti-war movement in the US itself...

A: This was one more result of our constant practice of revolutionary analysis. In waging a war against us, the US government had no choice but to require that the American people make sacrifices, which were senseless. Hence, the American people had to be convinced that the policy of its government was not in its own interest, that the war was carried on in the interest of capitalist pressure groups at the expense of the American masses (and the French before that). But... in order to have the people on the enemy side feel solidarity with us, we also had to be very strong and efficient on the military level. This is a fundamental point. I must emphasize however, that when we speak of military action, we mean a mass military struggle, military action, which, whether by guerrilla or other methods, is organised, responds to the situation of the people and stems from it, something not to be confused with individual terrorism. We firmly condemn individual terrorism in all its manifestations.

Al Fajr: During the occupation, notwithstanding popular unity, there were in South Vietnam spies, collaborators with the enemy. What did you do in these cases?

A: We tried to rehabilitate them, persuade them that they were on the wrong path. If the ways of persuasion proved impossible, their cases were examined, discussed, and they were tried and condemned to death as a punishment and as a deterrent. This is an inevitable rule.

Al Fajr: Through your struggle the Vietnamese leadership, the official representatives of the organisations both inside the country and abroad, the cadres on all levels, lived in conditions of extreme austerity. When assigned a mission abroad, Vietnamese officials never took their families, although the separation often meant leaving even very young children under conditions of war and occupation. They lived together, in whatever premises were furnished to the Vietnamese resistance representatives by the friends of their movement. Their meals were the same as those they would have consumed in Vietnam. This applied to both the FLN and PRG people as well as to those of the RDV which was already an independent state, and the same practice was followed inside the country — the leaders, like the most remote peasants, rode on bicycles, not in luxury cars. What role did this austerity play in the cohesion of the movement and in its achievements?

A. A decisive role. The basic consideration has always been that the means including the money, belong to the people, and the people's money should not be wasted light-heartedly. The needs of the people have priority above all else, and they are many. This austerity bolstered the deep ties and the mutual confidence between the people and the leadership — a fundamental condition for the success of a revolutionary struggle, of any struggle for the liberation of a people from foreign occupation and from every form of oppression.

Since the days of Jamal Abd-al Nasser, and particularly since the signing of the Camp David accords, Egyptian and Palestinian perceptions of one another have undergone profound change Below, two recent travellers to Cairo examine aspects of present-day Egyptian society and attitudes towards Palestinians.

THE FRUITS OF CAMP DAVID

by O. Andres

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak came out with nothing less than a warning against the PLO, March 5. The threat came after a small voice for the rejection of the Camp David accords was heard recently from a few hundred lawyers and members of opposition parties. They marched through the centre of Cairo, demonstrating on the third anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel.

Mubarak warned the PLO that Camp David contains possibilities for the Palestinians but that time is running out as the US presidential elections approach. According to one international news agency, Mubarak threatened "strong action" against PLO interference in Egyptian politics. While stressing his support for the Palestinian people he reportedly said that the interests of his own people must come first.

Having just returned from a brief visit to Egypt, this by no means surprised me. A picture of the contemporary political situation in Egypt is not inviting to the PLO.

During the '70s there was a considerable growth in the Egyptian economy, especially in the service sector and through remittances from Egyptian workers abroad. But there was also a sharp increase in the number of bellies to feed. The population rose from 30.9 million in 1969 to 40 million a decade later, according to official Egyptian government publications. The same sources reveal that 44 percent of those people were living in towns or urban areas. Egypt exports agricultural goods but 40 percent of its grain needs have to be purchased abroad. Next year it is estimated that agriculture will provide less than one-fifth of the gross national product.

These basic facts of economic reality should be taken into consideration when regarding Egypt's place in the Arab world. For Egypt, the Camp David agreement meant the implementation of "The Open Door Policy". This, in its turn, has meant that Arab capital contributions to the vast investment programme is equal to the capital contributions of the US and the European Common Market countries.

Complexity

Foreign observers point to the fact that because of its huge population, Egypt cannot be ignored by the Arab world (or by others). There is an expectation of new political initiatives, and so it has been for a long time. But the picture is complex.

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same time, the air-route between Cairo and Baghdad is about to be reopened and Egypt started talks with Israel on the Taba border dispute according to the Camp David ground rules. The official Egyptian tone to Israel carries a note of warning, today. But, at the same time, the Government Press Office in Cairo provides the foreign press with a booklet containing this message: "When the Israelis sign an agreement they respect it, and this is true."

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With Negative Views

To some taxi drivers there was difficulty in placing the West Bank on the map. Language problems might have been the explanation. More serious were certain negative attitudes.

One female student from the Ein Shams University in Cairo claimed she knew Palestinians.

"There are several living around here," she said, and added with a certain emphasis: in their big villas. They even openly admit that they do not want to do anything other than to live here and make money. They say there is nothing they can do to help their people, so they do nothing," she was eager to say. "But we have paid, even with our blood. Why shall we suffer for the Palestinians? Those people in the refugee camps. . . I have heard that many of them are very rich," she claimed.

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. . . . . She suggested that those in the West Bank and Gaza just had to "reach some kind of agreement with the Israelis. Then they will be as well off as the Arabs in Israel." she said. . . . . .

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Sadat

One tends to believe there are personal matters behind such hostility. But it was not difficult to trace some uneasiness when the situation of the Palestinians became a topic of conversation, namely the Palestinians inside Israel, West Bank and Gaza.

The girl's concept of who "does not want peace" was not exclusively hers. The former senior civil servant who did not know about the possibility of visiting Jerusalem, expressed the same idea. He was also of the opinion that the problem of the Palestinians was their not wanting to come to terms with Israel.

He was among those explaining what courage former President Anwar Sadat had shown when he "came to terms." The former civil servant's explanation did not differ much from the official characterisation of the late president — often rendered in the voice of his successor, Husni Mubarak — as a true national hero.

Far more difficult to revive is the social dissatisfaction that was frequently voiced during the last years of Sadat. Visiting Cairo, one finds a striking poverty. Even the most positive official propaganda openly declares that housing is a problem of huge dimensions. Today an unknown number of Cairenes lodge in the 'City of the Dead' the city cemetary, where the better-off families provide full residences for the souls of their deceased.

Except for counting the tasks, the propaganda tells little else of what difficulties there are. Instead, it emphasises again and again the necessity of peace to achieve its aims.

"Peace is in our interest, and we need it. It is life and there will be no prosperity in Egypt without peace." The quotation is from the above mentioned booklet from the Press Office as expressed by President Husni Mubarak in an interview 18 months ago.

At least to some degree the message seems to have hit home - primarily the 'Peace,' and the 'Open Door.' In the Arab Republic of Egypt, according to its constitution a democratic socialist state, the private sector of the economy expanded by some 20-25 percent between 1973 and 1979, and the present five-year plan demands a reduction of the percentage of foreign components in fixed investments (from 63 percent in 1980 to 56 percent in 1981, according to a not-too-new source). The loudest voices say: 'Peace and Prosperity.' What is otherwise heard is mainly an echo.

WHERE HAS THE EGYPT OF NASSER GONE?

by Wajdan Husseini

I turned left off Dizengoff and started down Basil looking for the Egyptian embassy. I had come to Tel Aviv from Jerusalem with one objective in mind — to obtain a visa to enter Egypt by way of Rafah. I was annoyed that I had to spend half a day to complete a task which I felt was the tourist agency's duty. The only comforting thing was that I would not have to wait in a long line for long hours, wondering if my name would be the next one called, because my travel agent had assured me that as an American I would receive the entrance permit on the spot.

When my brother and I were younger, my father told us everything he could remember of the people and customs of his village in the West Bank. By way of stories, he vividly introduced us to the inhabitants of the area, but never did he refer to them as Palestinians. "They, like ourselves, were Arabs," he would say, displaying his pride without the least bit of hesitation. My father never differentiated between someone from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt or Palestine because they all possessed the blood of a people who once had created an empire which had advanced as well as preserved world civilisation, which had been held in great esteem and which had been so precise that it was able to create wonders such as the Dome of the Rock and al-Hambra. Unfortunately, with time, they allowed themselves and their world to be crushed by internal fighting and external occupation.

However, according to my father, the time was upon us when the Arabs would be within their own once again, with Egypt guiding the way under the brilliant and charismatic command of its then-President Jamal Abd al-Nasser. The Arabs would no longer be the oppressed, bickering, disjointed group of people they had been for the past several hundred years. No, they would evolve into a well-unified entity, independent of West and East.

My reminiscing was interrupted by the sight of the Egyptian flag high above a three-storey building. I walked to its left where several people were sitting or standing completing their application forms. Before approaching the two windows and their attendants, I checked my watch and was relieved to see it was only 10 am. I calculated that I cuuld make it back to Jerusalem by noon. Signs were mounted above each window, one with the word 'Israelians' the other with 'Other Nationalities.' Not being an Israeli I stood in front of the other window. As I waited in a line of four or five, I noticed another sign which proved my travel agent was an unreliable source: 'Applications will be accepted between 9:00 to 11:00 am. Visas can be obtained from 2:00 to 2:15 pm.' "There goes the afternoon," I thought.

The line now dwindled down to one woman with an American passport. She and the Egyptian attendent were talking and laughing as they went through the motions of preparing the visa. Occasionally, she would use the Arabic word *'aywa'* (OK) and the official would, laughing, repeat the word to her. They finished their joyous transaction and I moved up to the window. As I pushed my passport through the bars of the window, the woman returned and asked me to ask the attendent a question concerning the fee. The official answered me in a pleasant manner and I, in turn relayed the information to the other American. The Egyptian's attitude and expression remained pleasant until he opened my passport.

"You are an American?" he asked suspiciously.

"Yes," I answered.

"Your name isn't American."

"My father is Palestinian."

He glanced at my application form as I stood somewhat amazed by his questioning and change in mood. I did not expect him to jump up, pump my hand and invite me for coffee, but I had thought upon seeing my name he might try to exchange a few words in Arabic. "Why not," I thought, "he communicated with the woman in Arabic, if you want to call swapping one word, communicating."

"Money," he snapped. I handed him the exact amount and in return he said nothing.

By now it was 10:30. I had a lot of time to kill till 2:00 pm. Knowing no one in Tel Aviv, I wandered up and down Dizengoff, Ben Yehuda and Allenby. All the while, strolling, standing and sitting in book stores, sidewalk cafes, clothing stores and record shops. The time passed slowly 11:00, 12:00, 1:00. At 1:30, I headed back to Basil.

continued on page 13

Mahmoud Darwish is talking about poetry, vagabondage, Palestine, and the future...

An interview by Batrain Bara

Mahmoud Darwish

Q: When you talk about your childhood, you avoid talking of your longing for the lost paradise. Why?

Darwish. My childhood is not only my own personal childhood. but a collective childhood. It is not Andalus (the Arabic name for Spain – a place lost forever). Andalus is not a place but a psychological state. Regarding Palestine, it is my childhood, it is the paradise which can be created and it is not a paradise lost. When I talk about it I talk a lot because I want to put my hand on my origins. In this sense, Palestine is not a memory but an existence, it is not a past but a future. Palestine is not a mythological Andalus but a regainable Andalus.

Q: What do you do to incorporate militant eloquence and the aestheticism of the poet?

Darwish: I don't know. I am not being masochistic to say that the struggle is beautiful in itself. The Palestinian militant is living a beautiful dream (the road on which the Palestinian militant walks). The struggle's aestheticism comes from its wounds. The aim is basically beautiful. It gives the militant an opportunity to achieve freedom.

"It is not easy for a six-year-old child to learn words such as 'tent', 'Red Cross', 'UNRWA' and 'the return'. In 1948 I came across these words as if I were colliding with a boulder. These words began to pave my road as a poet."

Q: But is this the struggle which forms the poet or does the poet continue his life as a militant?

Darwish: I will not say that I have two wings and can fly; the poetry, the cause of the poetry, the resistance poetry is attempting to be a higher rank than the struggle. It is not that every Palestinian speech is poetry because it talks about Palestine and the struggle. Ask a French poet if his poetry on love comes from the language or from the beauty of his lover.

Up to now our tragedy has moved the poet. We did not (create) poetry to express this tragedy, nor did the political speech(makers). Our situation, then, is more tragic than an Athenian tragedy. We all are the product of an Athenian tragedy to some extent. But they are only plays without an equivalent reality. In our case, the opposite is true: the tragedy hurts a complete people. The tragedy of this people in particular comes from the fact that they have not yet received recognition of the torment in which they live. Ours represents a victimised people who have attempted for half a century to present themselves as victims. But people do not believe them.

Q: Your world has been characterised by certain words.

Darwish: It is not easy for a six-year-old child to learn words such as 'tent', 'Red Cross', 'UNRWA' and 'the return'. In 1948 I came across these words as if I were colliding with a boulder. These words began to pave my road as a poet. Later, I understood my profession: my Arab awareness was formed. This led me to choose exile. To leave my country meant that my life was cut to pieces. The Palestinian struggle can be summed up, in fact, through the Palestinians' attempts to assemble these parts. The next stage of my life can be described as "Arab shock"

Q: What do you mean 'Arab Shock'?

Darwish Up till then I lived in Israel. Everything that is black in Israel had, in my personal consciousness, a 'bright' equivalent on the Arab side. From this, hope came. In 1971, after I visited several Arab countries, I discovered that reality is far from what I imagined. The Arab regimes have many serious concerns and they are really seeking to solve their problems. But there is one issue which never concerns them: the Palestinian cause. What concerns the Arab countries is Israel, not Palestine. The only battle which the Arab people lived and witnessed is the battle the Arab regimes are waging against the Palestinians and against the Arab citizen himself, this is the "Arab shock."

Q: What did you do during the siege of Beirut?

Darwish: Beirut was the crown of the "Arab Shock", and its bloody translation. Beirut is more than a shock, it is the warning siren, a scandal. Israel did nothing more than pick the fruit of the status quo created by the Arab world. Beirut was an island besieged by the Israeli war fleet and Arab impotence. Israeli airplanes and Arab prayers invaded its sky. During the war, I was as an observer but I bled with inability and bitterness. I wrote articles and poetry. I felt submissive and annihilated because I could not carry weapons.

Q: There is a feeling that the image of Palestinians is either that of terrorist or victim. How do you characterise Palestinians?

Darwish: This has no meaning. I want to say that I am solely a victim. I have never been a murderer. There are four images of the Arab-Israeli conflict mixed together in the European consciousness: the murderer, the victim, the judge and the witness.

During the war in Lebanon we received some support from the world public. But the Palestinian must not be deceived because this support is not deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people. The West still refuses to change its image of Israel.

Q: Do you have friends in Israel?

Darwish: Yes, I have two close friends. They are great Israeli poets. Yehuda Amihai is one of those who expresses the psychological and historical crisis in Israel. The other woman friend is also a poet.

Q: Is individual political recognition a problem for you?

Darwish: Individuals on both sides showed their desire to recognise each other. When the Palestinian was hanging naked in the emptiness of Beirut, he saw but one supporter: the demonstrators in Tel Aviv. Most of them expressed their belief in the right of the Palestinians to establish their own state. Some small parties and prominent individuals in Israel also acknowledge this right.

On the Palestinian side, some individuals expressed their view of a mutual future with Israelis. The Palestine National Council and Yasir Arafat said several times that they want to talk with Israelis who want to recognise the right of the Palestinians. But this is no more than mumbling. The basic question is political recognition the Palestinian state is still missing and (because it is) the US and Europe demand recognition of Israel.

Q: It is said that there is no hatred in your poetry. Is this true?

Darwish: I am not a hater, and there is no hatred in my heart. Torments teach tolerance and repentance. I do not feel hatred against any community. I can forgive the Israelis who came from abroad to oppose me on the condition that they recognise my existence. I cannot live the history of a ghetto and this is the difference between the Israelis and the Palestinians. They depend on their generations of hate against Europe but we depend on human openness.

Q: Is there any religious influence in your poetry?

Darwish: My family is Muslim but I am a product of Palestine in which all religions coexist. Palestine was not only Muslim, Christian or Jewish. All these mythologies have an equal effect upon me. Every religious text is part of the universal culture; I reject fanaticism.

Q: Let us examine some of Arafat's speeches, especially the speech of 1974 at the United Nations. (On the basis of this speech) do you consider him a committed poet?

Darwish: An official poet is not a poet. Yasir Arafat knows well that I am not an official poet and he approaches me like any Palestinian. I admire him. I saw him during the last war like a hesistant mythological hero. Nothing separates his fate from my fate. He is a strange mixture of dreamer, engineer, father, son, tactician and strategist. He knows when to strike the clouds with his head and when to bend before a small bird. At this stage I agree with his political maneuvers but the West has not opened to him.

Q: How do you contact your family in the occupied territories?

Darwish: My parents live in Israel with all my sisters and brothers. I contact them by telephone; if I saw them I would not recognise them. From time to time (homesickness) overwhelms me. But if I submit to it I will pay a very heavy price.

Q: Your friends describe you as a loner, an escapist and one who has no opinions.

Darwish: The basic reason for my worry and anxiety is that I have "the dullness' of the rich. At the same time I am not rich. This is the reason I have no bond with any place in the world. A vein attracts me to a land, the vein is cut and I am able to 'marry' any other place, or divorce, without apparent problems.

Q: When do you write?

Darwish: In the mornings only. Personally I do not like poetry, I read novels. When I feel something driving me to write poetry, I feel sick. Then I write to cure myself. Poetry is the essence of my life but it is not so serious. It is a game. It is an anarchist explosion. I prefer life to poetry.

Q. Do you see poetry in life or in your writing?

Darwish: The embodiment of poetry is in writing, but the absolute poetry exists only in life. The relation between life and nature is a tempestuous debate. My rebuttal of poetry depends on consciousness. I refuse to be teacher or student in particular poetry schools. I do not want to make myself a captive of a poetry school or theory when faced suddenly, at any moment, with life. A poetry school can not create a poem. But any creative poem can make a poetry school.

"Beirut was the crown of the 'Arab shock', and its bloody translation. Beirut is more than a shock, it is the warning siren, a scandal. Israel did nothing more than pick the fruit of the status quo created by the Arab world."

Q: They say that you were elegant and bloated in Beirut.

Darwish: It is an impression that I created. I am an actor. I am avid for life but my principles prevent me from swallowing it whole. I am, in fact, a project of anarchy or frustration; this is my poetry and I am a copy of it and not *vice versa*. My poetry is not serious, it is a game but it is a game from suffering. I like critics to read sarcasm in my poetry.

Q: Is the return to Palestine possible? Or will the return make your poetry empty?

Darwish: The development of the Palestine cause does not allow for talk about the return. I prefer to use the expression "to go to Palestine" for the return belongs to the past. The return is a mythological idea but going to Palestine can be completed by the revolutionary march. This is the difference between Palestine and Andalus, between the Zionist project and the Palestinian project. My poetry will continue till the dawn.

Q: How did you leave Beirut?

Darwish: I decided not to leave Beirut because I was ashamed of my consecutive emigrations. I stayed in Beirut. The Israeli army entered and attempted to arrest me. I tasted my petty illusions as a poet. I managed to leave Beirut secretly with the help of a Lebanese officer.

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

The continued protests in the West Bank and the final statement of the Nonaligned conference in New Delhi were the major stories in the local Palestinian press this week.

The attempt by over 40 Israeli settler-soldiers to enter the wall around al-Aqsa mosque, their subsequent arrest and the discovery of their carrying weapons and food supplies arose sentiments of anger throughout the West Bank. This incident, added to the continued settler harassment of Palestinians and the visit of former US President Jimmy Carter, was high among the reasons given for the continued demonstrations and stone-throwing incidents throughout the week. Several camps in the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas continue to suffer under strict curfews.

The final statement read by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the close of the seventh summit of nonaligned countries, with its support for Palestinian national rights, received top coverage in all Palestinian papers published in the occupied territories.

Settler Threats Confirm the Need for an Independent State

It is worthwhile for those who support the Reagan plan and who raise the slogan of 'saving what can be saved', with guarantees permitting the existing settlements to remain, as mentioned in the aforesaid plan, to contemplate [the events of] the past two weeks of Israeli settlers' attacks in Hebron, and on refugee camps and some Palestinian villages in the West Bank.

These attacks and threats have revealed that "saving what can be saved" of the land, is no protection to either its owners or those living on it, just as in the present situation in South Lebanon. The settlers' "militias" act in the same way towards a number of refugee camps in the West Bank. The report of the *Haaretz* correspondent on the infiltration of settlers into the camps confirms this fact. They told him that they would present the camp residents with the alternative of leaving or submitting. Some of them said that they would use arms, whilst others said they would damage Arab property.

These practices, for which the Israeli government bears the total responsibility, indicate that the aim of settlement is not limited to Israeli expansion at the expense of the Arabs, nor to a mere prevention of the Palestinian people obtaining their right to establish an independent state, but goes further; it is an attempt to end the Palestinian presence in this land. The latest activities of the settlers are indicative of this direction, if it is not already absolutely apparent.

The response to this is not neither for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip, nor for their brethren in the refugee camps in Lebanon, in the Reagan plan.

The pretext of saving "what land remains" which the submissive and those who embrace Camp David and others of their sort repeat, will not halt the current facts which accompany threats to the land and the Palestinian people and which affirm the impossibility of separating land from people who, with their sacrifices and toil, have given the characteristic of a homeland.

The recent threats, whether in Hebron or Dhahriyeh or in the refugee camps throughout the West Bank, reconfirm that a solution for the Palestinian people cannot come about other than through the establishment of their independent state.

AL TALIAH
March 10

Who Nourishes Extremism?

We, like others, have often warned of the danger of Israeli extremist factions, not only to Palestinian Arabs but also Israelis.

We said that these factions find fertile soil in official Israeli policy which denies Palestinian rights and claim that all the land is part of greater Israel.'

The Israeli's prevention of an extremist group from breaking into the holy al-Aqsa mosque avoided undoubted slaughter and extremely grave consequences, many Israeli officials say. But this conspiracy is not the first and will surely not be the last. The general political climate in Israel nourishes and strengthens such factions; whether this is intentional or otherwise the results are the same. Bringing the perpetrators to court is not the whole solution, even though trial and punishment are necessary.

The solution, if the Israeli authorities are really serious about finding one, is Israeli recognition that the Palestinian people have rights in their land and to self-determination. They must stop making inflamatory claims and devastating Palestinian land. Without this, the situation will escalate as the current events the last few weeks on the West Bank confirm.

AL MITHAQ
March 12

Khalsa, Khalde and Now Washington

The foreign ministers of Lebanon and Israel have flown to Washington to continue their talks there on an agreement over the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

It is common knowledge that Israel occupied Lebanese territory under the pretext of driving the Palestinian fighters away from its northern settlements. This danger has been removed, and the Palestinian forces have left Lebanon, apart from the Beqa a region. There are Lebanese proposals which would guarantee no attacks on Israel's northern settlements.

Still, the Israeli government insists on not reaching a solution to this problem militarily, with military negotiations and security arrangements. It is demanding political gains, to be imposed on the Lebanese government by force and totally ignoring the fact that asking Lebanon to open its doors to Israel means shutting it off from the Arab world as a whole. They also ignore the fact that they cannot substitute 22 states in return for one.

The question is: Is it possible to achieve in Washington what cannot be achieved in Khalde and Khalsa?

The Lebanese-Israeli negotiations all along have been "guarded" by the Americans. Even the Israeli war, before it began and until it ended, was also "cared for" by the Americans. Does this change anything in Israel's basic and overall position in its relations with the Arabs?

It can be said that transfering the negotiations from Khalde and Khalsa to Washington will not lead to any basic change in the Israeli position because such a change is impossible in present circumstances.

Only a change in American policy can "save" the Israeli-Lebanese negotiations, whether held in Khalde, Khalsa or Washington.

As long as such a change does not appear on the horizon, it is only self-deception to suppose that merely transfering the negotiations to Washington means that the US wants to make "an effective effort" or that it takes "seriously" the departure of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

The idea of another forthcoming excursion in the Middle East makes remaining longer in Lebanon attractive (to Israel).

AL FAJR
March 13

The Seven Member Committee

Mr. Yassir Arafat, chairman of the PLO executive committee, announced yesterday that the seven-member committee which emerged from the Arab summit at Fez, is to meet in Fez on March 28.

The meeting will take place after the committee has completed its visit to the important British capital, taking with it details of the Arab peace plan to officials of a country which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Although we believe that the position of the superpowers towards the Palestinian and Arab cause is basically known, the visits of the committee to the capitals of these countries has clarified this position for those who tried to fog over or find excuses and justifications (for this stand).

Consequently, the hostility of both the American and British positions are now clear to everyone... When the seven-member committee meets in a few days time, it is advisable that they build an Arab stand towards these states on the basis of their position vis-a-vis the Arabs and their rights.

Will the Arab states agree to take such measures and positions?

AL SHAAB
March 15

LEBANON: PHALANGISTS ARREST, JAIL PALESTINIAN WOMEN

by Livia Rokach
Our Rome Correspondent

More than 200 Palestinian women have been illegally arrested or kidnapped around Beirut between October and February by Phalangist militiamen. They are being held at the Phalangist barracks in Adonis, near Junieh, where they are brutally treated according to reports issued by the Committee of the Prisoners' Families in Beirut.

Most of the arrests have occurred at roadblocks betweeen the Beqa'a and Beirut where the women were stopped on their return home with money collected from relatives or aid organisations outside the Lebanese capital. The women have sought relief to keep their families from starving in Beirut camps where the Palestinian community is being economically suffocated. The Phalangists reportedly stole the women's money and accused them of working for the PLO and of attempting to finance the Palestinians in Lebanon, which they term "an unforgivable crime."

The Phalangists have imprisoned the women in their own jails, which, according to the president of the party, Pierre Gemayel, 'do not exist." The roadblocks where the arrests occurred are at Arbaniyeh near Beir Meri, and Barbara near Junieh.

One Palestinian woman who stopped at Barbara en route to Beirut from Baalbek was taken to an isolated cabin and left there with her three small children without food and water. The LL9,000 she was carrying was taken away. In the evening of the third day her guards brought two blindfolded men and shot them to death in front of her children. The next day she was released but her money remained in Phalangist hands.

The Phalangists -world famous for their heroism againt undefended women and children- have thus discovered a new source of income for themselves. The Lebanese army, however, is doing its best to keep up this reputation too. Thus, Thrayh Raajeh, a young woman who before the war worked as secretary at the Palestinian Women's Union, is known to have been tortured so cruelly at Yarze following her unmotivated arrest in mid-November that, according to inside sources, the army does not dare release her now.

Another case is that of Walida Freij, who was injured by a bomb in Sidon during the war and then arrested with her child and deported to Israel where her leg was amputated. Following this "kind" treatment she was retransferred to Lebanon and consigned to the Lebanese army at the end of August. She is still detained at Baabda jail. Her child, who was released and has joined a brother and sister in the Beqa'a, suffered burns over his whole body. He says that his mother's body and head were likewise covered with burns when he left her.

Another woman, Najah Muhammad Suleiman al-Haj, a 27 year old Palestinian from Burj al-Barajneh camp, has also been a victim of barbarous exchanges between Big Brother and Little Mercenary Brothers. Arrested, tortured and raped by Phalangists at Bhamdoun, then passed over to the militia of Qatzim al-Khlail near Tyre, Najah was consigned, mid-January, to the occupation authority and transferred to Israel where a doctor visited her in hospital and saw the marks of violence on her body. On March 8 she was retransferred along with all other Palestinian and Lebanese women prisoners back to Lebanon. No one, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, knows where and into whose hands.

In related developments:

* The persecution of the civilian Palestinian population of Beirut where Phalangist militias are active, and the issues of prisoners and missing, was the main subject of the two-hour session between PLO Chairman Yasirir Arafat and Lebanese President Amin Gemayel in New Delhi during the Conference of Non-Aligned States.

* Kuwait has cut off all aid to, and investment in, Lebanon until the Lebanese government can provide effective guarantees for the security of the Palestinian population in Beirut.

* According to the Italian News Agency, ANSA, the Palestinian Research Centre will shortly be transferred to Tunisia. The decision was taken after a meeting between Amin Gemayel and Professor Walid Khalidi, chairman of the centre and one of his staff, failed to produce the required security guarantees for the PRC. The centre was car-bombed, February 5. Twenty-three PRC staffers were killed and 107 injured in the explosion which devastated the archives and library which had been looted by the Israelis, September 16.

* Also according to an ANSA dispatch from Beirut, in early March several Lebanese construction firms have been invited by the occupation authorities to submit estimates for construction of a big new prison close to Nabatiyeh, near Ansar. According to the Italian agency, "this is one more indication that Israel is taking steps to consolidate its occupation of South Lebanon."

* No less than four attacks on convoys of occupation troops in South Lebanon were carried out within the 36 hours between Sunday, March 13, and Monday evening, March 14, according to Lebanese sources quoted by the Italian press. Four soldiers were killed in Damour, three in Nabatiyeh and several others were reported wounded near Tyre and north of Sidon. Another occupation soldier was reported killed in a bomb explosion in the centre of Sidon, March 12.

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Nasser's Egypt?

Fifty people waited outside the windows. At 2:05, the window shutters opened and the anxious crowd packed into the waiting space. Within 10 minutes, I was at the front of the line.

"Where's your number?" asked the official handing out stamped passports.

"What number?"

"The number you were given this morning when you gave your money."

"I didn't receive any number."

"Oh, you must have. I think you lost it. Name."

I expected that in his disgust at discovering my background, the attendent had forgotten by mistake or design to give me a number. After a 10 minute search, the passport was not to be found. The official instructed me to return the next day at 9:00 am and my visa would be probably waiting for me. I checked into a hotel, spending money I really did not have to spend, and watched television until I became tired enough to sleep.

By the time the windows opened at 9:15, I had been waiting for 45 minutes. The attendant from the evening before told me my passport was still not ready and to come back at 2:00 that afternoon. I tried to protest, but it had little effect on the situation. Once again, restaurants and shops served as my shelter.

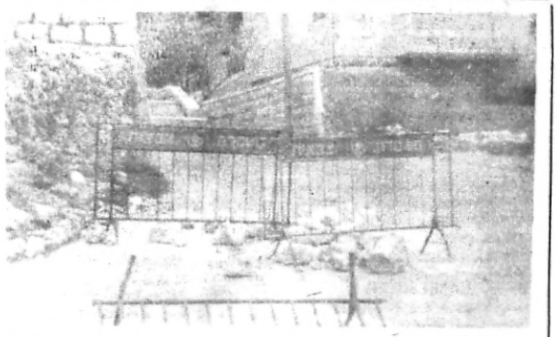
At 2:00 pm, the man handed me my passport complete with the visa, but without any explanation or apology.

When I returned to Jerusalem, I went to my travel agent and asked if it was unusual that I had to wait two days for the visa. "I thought you being an American would not have to go through what average Palestinians do," she said. "Now you see what hardship we must experience." She went on to tell me that all the Palestinians, for whom she had arranged travel to Egypt, had to wait longer than the others. One man from Gaza had to wait three days.

The reason I am writing this, is to ask what has happened to Arab nationalism and its leader, Egypt? Did it die with Nasser in 1970 or has its death been lingering over the years, finally ending with the horrors of this summer in Beirut? Egyptian President Mubarak, as did his predecessor, Sadat, speaks of the equality of the Palestinians and their right to self-determination. Mubarak recalled his ambassador from Tel Aviv because Israel refuses to acknowledge these rights. However, when I try to simply obtain a visa to travel to this country, which I used to think would direct this part of the world towards prosperity, I wonder how my name and heritage was looked upon as less than desirable.

Unfortunately, my father's dream will have to remain just that – a dream – for awhile longer. For the fantasy has grown cold and the speeches and songs trite and shallow. Jamal Abd al-Nasser was and still is a symbol of an ideology that Egypt along with the rest of the Arab world is unable and far from prepared to grasp.

To Palestinians living in the diaspora:
If you need professional assistance including legal advice for buying, selling or renting or collecting rent in the West Bank,
Contact: **Omar International**
P.O.Box 20185
Jerusalem
Tel. 972 (2) 283791
Telex 26467 Omar il



Roadblocks outside Bethlehem University. The university was closed until further notice by the Israeli military authorities on March 10. The closure followed student demonstrations against former US President Jimmy Carter's visit to Bethlehem.

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Democracy?

basis for the establishment of a democratic society that respects human rights.

The conclusions of the inquiry commission do not signify "the great hour of democracy". On the contrary, it is an hour in which democratic rights are trampled upon everywhere; in the West Bank, in Gaza Strip, in Lebanon and inside Israel.

In spite of all this, there exists a democracy in Israel, though it is still weak. It beats in the hearts of those who totally opposed this war. It is spread by those who refuse to take part in the abhorrent actions that are being carried out in the occupied territories and in Lebanon, and by those workers who, during the war, swam against the stream and were fired for their views.

The real support for this democracy - the only one existing in Israel– is the Palestinian national movement. The link between them is the basis for victory. The Palestinian people who are imbued with a deep democratic belief and democratic aspirations for Jews and Arabs, are the ally for reviving democracy and peace.

There can exist no democracy without peace, without respect for the rights of the Palestinians. The conclusions of the inquiry commission should become a red light for the Israeli people. All the hand grenades, the bombers, the cluster bombs will not stop democracy. The great hour of democracy will surely come. In this democracy, Jews and Arabs will live as equals. The natural right for the Palestinian people to self-determination and return to its homeland will materialise. Only then the cause for all wars in our area will disappear and vanish. (Translated from *Derech Hanitzotz*, 1.3.83)

March 9 1983

SCHOOL BOMBS

HEBRON — Two explosive devices were found and defused in the Tareq Ben Ziad and Ibn Rushd schoolyards in Hebron.

HAMDALLAH'S CASE TO AMNESTY

Lawyer Felicia Langer has sent a letter to Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organisation, asking them to adopt the case of Anabta Mayor Wahid Hamdallah as a prisoner of conscience. Langer drew attention to the authorities' renewal of Hamdallah's town restriction on March 3, for the sixth time since 1980.

NEW AMMO

A number of demonstrators fired ball bearings in catapults at Israeli vehicles and border guard patrols, according to Israel Radio. The authorities are investigating.

The Radio added that a number of students riding a bus threw stones at an Israeli army jeep standing in the middle of the town. Soldiers fired a few times, then border guards arrived and imposed a curfew on the area.

CAR BOMB

TEL AVIV — A booby-trapped car exploded near a border post in Metulla on the Israeli-Lebanese border. Israel TV said that members of (Palestinian) organisations drove up in two cars, left one near the Voice of Free Lebanon radio station (belonging to separatist leader Saad Haddad) and drove away in the other car. The booby-trapped car then exploded.

CAR DEATHS

One Israeli soldier was killed and two others injured in a road accident when the military vehicle in which they were travelling overturned on the coastal road near Atlit.

LAND GRAB I

HEBRON — The Israeli authorities have recently confiscated 5000 dunums of land at Tarqumia near Hebron. The owners of the confiscated land intend to try to get the confiscation order rescinded. They said that they have legal documents proving their ownership.

TEACHER FIRED

RAMALLAH — The 'civil administration' has issued an order dismissing teacher Walid Mahmoud Abu Surur of 'Aida camp from his post at Beit Iksa preparatory school. No reasons were given.

UNIVERSITY CLOSED

The Israeli army declared Bethlehem University a closed military area andimposed a siege preventing students from leaving. The moves followed demonstrations and stone throwing at Israeli vehicles to protest the visit of former US President Carter to the town. Israeli forces used tear gas and fired in the air.

LAND GRAB II

HEBRON — The military appeals Committee heard two appeals against land grabs. The first concerns the confiscation of 500 dunums belonging to the children of the late Abd Assad al-Khamisa of Tuffah in the Hebron district; the second, the confiscation of approximately 2000 dunums belonging to the Sharha tribe in Dura.

The land owners possess documents proving land ownership.

BOMB IN EAST JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces closed off Salah al-Din Street in East Jerusalem after finding a suspicious object near the Israeli central court. Israeli explosives experts arrived and found that the object was not dangerous.

RAIN STOPPED HAY

As the result of torrential rain-falls in the occupied Arab territories, especially in the north of the West Bank, approximately 7000 dunums of land are unfit for agriculture in the Jenin and Maithaloun regions and neighbouring villages.

LEAGUES HARASSMENT

The charitable society in the village of Sanoura in the Jenin district is being subject to pressures and harassment by the Village League of the village.

March 10 1983

AL-AQSA GRAB FOILED

A large number of Israelis, some of them armed, tried to enter al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem late at night. The police came and arrested four of them who were armed.

DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

Rabbi Meir Kahane, head of the Kach movement, at a press conference held in Beit Agron in Jerusalem was reported by *Davar* saying that if the Kach movement was outlawed, he would set up a new movement.

Kahane described the Israeli army *not* shooting stone-throwers as simple 'stupidity'. When he was asked if it was just to shoot stone-throwers Kahane said "I am opposed to killing. Arab village from which stones are thrown must be brought under control and all its residents expelled to the East Bank."

Kahane rejected Israeli democracy because according to his view, western democracy does not correspond to the basis of Judaism. "A Jewish democracy must be established," he said.

Kahane added that he would continue to work for getting land to establish settlements for his movement on condition that they had no security fences around them.

STUDENTS AGAINST US

JERUSALEM — A students' meeting at Bethlehem University to discuss the events which occured during Carter's visit to the town and the Israeli army seige of the university, condemned Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij for his recent statements. The students declared a strike in protest of Freij's stand and Israeli army violation of the university campus.

NO PAPER LICENSE

Israel Koenig, governor of the northern district, has refused to give journalist Afif Salim permission to issue a local weekly newspaper in Nazareth.

HEL. ACROSS THE BORDERS

GALILEE — The Palestinian Aid Committee for Lebanon in the western Galilee has begun to collect contributions in order to buy school desks for Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon.

STONES

Three settlers were slightly wounded in the West Bank when they were hit by stones thrown by Arab residents.

A curfew was imposed on the Qasabeh quarter in Nablus and in a number of other places in the West Bank.

SETTLEMENT

Israel Radio reported that there is a plan to establish a civilian settlement on Jerizim mountain overlooking Nablus. The radio said it is one of seven which the government intends to build.

JERICHO ROUND UP

Students from Jericho have been summoned for questioning about demonstrations held in the town during the last three days. The 'civil governor' of Jericho said that all those who took part in the demonstrations will be brought to trial.

A number of students threw stones at cars and set fire to tyres in the main street of the town.

March 11 1983

CURFEW LIFTED

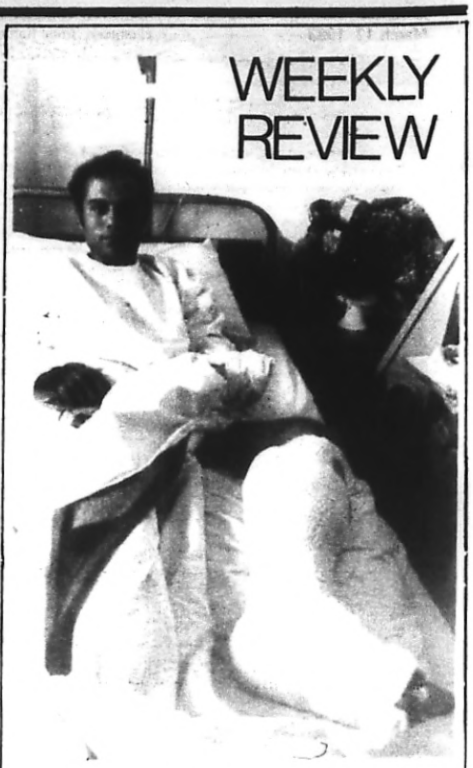
BETHLEHEM — The curfew on Aida refugee camp was lifted after three days. The camp is on the Bethlehem-Hebron road.

In Nablus the curfew was also lifted on the commercial section and the Qasabeh quarter. The curfew on Ain Beit al-Ma' refugee camp in Nablus continued for the second consecutive day after camp youths threw stones at Israeli vehicles.

SETTLER RAID

YATTA — Settlers raided the house of Yatta mukhtar al-Haj Rushdi Khalil Sari' for a second time and demanded he pay IS12,000 for glass they claim was smashed when their car was stoned by Yatta youths. They had earlier warned him to pay up by today. The mukhtar complained to the military authorities and police.

ISRAEL GO SLOW



Mahmoud Jamal Abu Khdair, 19 was wounded by Israeli soldiers during demonstrations in Jerusalem March 12.

DAMASCUS: AFP — Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad) member of FATAH central council, has blamed Israel for the slowness of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the exchange of prisoners being carried out with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and the International Red Cross.

BANNED BOOKS RAID

JENIN — The Isaeli military authorities raided the homes of Arrabeh municipal councillor Khalil Assad Rahal, Imad Badawi, Youssef Zaki Irreidi and Muhammad Assad 'Arradeh on the pretext of searching for banned books.

Hole outside Old City, Jerusalem wall, behind al-Aqsa mosque, through which Israeli settlers attempted to enter the mosques with weapons, building materials and food.

March 12 1983

CONDEMNATION AND CRITICISM

Following the closure of several West Bank education institutions, students issued the following statement:

"We, students of Tireh Institute, condemn and strongly criticise the savage and ugly acts carried out by the Israeli authorities against our Palestinian people in attacking our institutions, closing our universities and national institutes of education.

"We praise world public opinion for standing alongside the steadfast Palestinian ranks against Israeli repression, terrorism and occupation aimed at our national movement and educational institutions and our right to establish an independent Palestinian state led by the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of our people everywhere."

TAX RAIDS

Tax officials in Tulkarm raided shops, clinics and the premises of self-employed people with the aim of forcing them to keep accounts.

CURFEW II

A curfew was imposed on Dhahriyeh after two persons were wounded when Israeli vehicles were pelted with stones.

Two Israeli policemen were injured in the center of Ramallah when a car was pelted with stones. Reports said that a shower of stones fell on Israeli soldiers after Carter's procession passed through Ramallah.

Amari camp was curfewed.

TRIAL FOR SETTLERS?

Forty-six settlers accused of attempting to attack al-Aqsa mosque appeared before a Jerusalem magistrates court and had their detention extended. On Friday two officers, members of the group, were detained for seven days.

BAZAAR FOR WOMEN

JERUSALEM The Silwan Sports Club opened a bazaar for the Palestinian Women's Committees Union in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

WORKERS MEET

RAMALLAH The General Committee of Government Schools Workers in the West Bank held a meeting to discuss salary cuts, the freezing of promotions, professional grading and the transfer of teachers.

March 13, 1983

MAYOR SHOT-UP

HEBRON Unidentified persons fired automatic weapons at the house of Haj Musa Amr, elected mayor of Dura. No one was hurt in the gunfire.

BEQA'A TENSION

Light weapons fire was directed at an Israeli army position four kilometers from Karm al-Louz village in the eastern region of Lebanon. No one was hurt, according to Israel Radio. This is the second time there has been firing in this area in the last 24 hours.

JORDAN ARRESTS ACTIVIST

EL-BIREH The Jordanian authorities arrested Dr. Samir Salameh Khalil, a pediatrician, after he returned to Amman from the PNC conference in Algeria. He spent a long period in Beirut as a volunteer during the Israeli invasion.

Dr. Khalil is the son of the head of the el-Bireh-based In'ash al-Usra Society, Samiha Khalil, who strongly condemned this action, and demanded his immediate release. Dr. Khalil, 34, is married to an Algerian journalist and has one child. He was to open a clinic in Amman.

SOLDIERS WOUNDED

TEL AVIV - The Israeli military spokesman announced that seven Israeli soldiers were wounded in an ambush on a patrol north of Sidon. The spokesperson said that the patrol was attackd with RPG rocket fire and automatic weapons while passing by the area.

Israeli forces returned fire and searched the area. Later,two Israeli border patrollers were wounded in an second ambush near Tyre.

CAR ARSONED

JENIN - Unidentified persons set fire to the car of Ghalib Khalef in front of his house in Jenin. The car was slightly damaged. Police came to investigate the incident.

BOMB IN AIN AL-HILWEH

BEIRUT - An explosive device went off in a car near Ain al-Hilweh camp at the southern entrance of Sidon. Radio Lebanon said that the car's Palestinian owner was seriously injured. The radio station said that Israeli forces surrounded the area and carried out a search.

CURFEW UP

The curfew imposed on Halhoul was lifted and residents went on strike.

BUS HIT IN JERUSALEM

An Israeli was wounded when an Israeli bus was pelted with stones in Wadi Joz. Israel Radio said that the Israeli bus travels regularly along the Jerusalem-Maale Adumim-al-Khan al-Ahmar line. Israeli forces searched the area.

TRIPOLI CLASHES RESUME

TRIPOLI - Lebanese police sources said that one person was killed and another injured when armed clashes resumed in Tripoli, north Lebanon.

LESSONS TIME

General Raphael Eitan, the Israeli chief of staff, demanded that those who throw stones be caught and given harsh punishments. He said, "The Palestinians have been fighting us for centuries, since the Ottoman Empire, and began throwing stones at their Jewish farmer neighbours who were working land near their villages. They are still throwing stones. We must teach these trouble makers a lesson they will not forget."

CAR ATTACKED

A spokesperson for the Israeli prisons said that a vehicle belonging to the prison's service was totally destroyed when stones were thrown at it. The spokesperson said that the two prisoners who were travelling in the vehicle escaped unhurt.

BEQA'A CLASH

A number of rounds of fire were opened on Israeli positions in the Karm al-Louz area. In the first incident in the area for five weeks, Palestinian fighters apparently opened up on Israeli positions. The Israelis returned fire.

March 14, 1983

NO SETTLERS?

Nissan Harbaz, general secretary of the Israeli workers' union, the Histadrut, said in Jerusalem that there are 4000 vacant housing units in the newly-built Jewish quarters in the city.

SIDON SCARE

SIDON Reports from Sidon say that Israeli forces in South Lebanon have been put on an extreme state of alert in the wake of increasing resistance. According to these reports, the forces have closed off areas where they were faced with two consecutive attacks and have cut the coastal road between Sidon and Beirut.

STONE-THROWER TRIALS

The Ramallah military court sentenced several youths accused of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles to eight months imprisonment, with fines of between IS10,000-25,000 and added suspended sentencesof between four months and one year.

The court gave three young women fines of between IS50,000 and 80,000 and suspended prison terms on the same charge. The judge said he regarded these stone-throwing incidents as "serious".

BOMB IN NABATIYEH

Israel Radio reported Lebanese sources as saying that there was an explosion in the central market of Nabatiyeh in South Lebanon. Three people were wounded and nearby cars were damaged.

NEW TRIPOLI CLASHES

TRIPOLI Three persons were killed and a number of others wounded in violent clashes in Tripoli, north Lebanon.

GUN GRAB

Unidentified persons broke into the offices of a security company, Hashmira, in Tiberias and stole 20 Uzi sub-machine guns. The police have formed a special unit to investigate the circumstances of the incident and to study the possibility that there is a connection between those who carried out the raid and Palestinian organisations.

March 15, 1983

ON THE ROCKS

Members of the Abu Ra iyeh clan in Tarqumia in the Hebron district have ostracised Muhammad Abd al-Majid Salem Abu Ra'iyeh for selling family land to Palestinian brokers cooperating with the Israelis according to an announcement published in local papers by four clan dignitaries.

Muhammed Abu Ra'iyeh confessed to clan members last week that he had sold 640 dunams in Khalet Khalal. He claimed that the brokers to whom he sold the land did not tell him they would transfer it to Israelis. Hassan Muhammad Awad Abu Ra'iyeh and three other members of the clan discovered the land was sold for JD9,000. Samir Ja abari, a judge at the Hebron magistrates court, has deemed the land sale void.

DIED FROM BEATING

Jamal Ahmad Masoud Nabli, 23, died in Jalazoun camp as a result of injuries he received when he was beaten by Israeli soldiers 10 months ago. He later spentl three months in Hadassah Hospital with a broken spine and then went to the American University in Beirut hospital and other centres in Arab countries.

NO SNOW

The Israeli occupation authorities have closed the Jordanian Secondary School in el-Bireh following demonstrations in the town. The authorities claimed that students had erected barriers on the Nablus-Ramallah road.

Two other schools, the Ramallah Girls Secondary School and Ramallah Boys School, were closed last week.

IN LEBANON

Israel Radio reported that an Israeli soldier was wounded when a foot patrol came across a land mine near Khayyam village in South Lebanon.

SHUT AND OPENED

HEBRON - The Israeli authorities allowed six tradesmen whose stores were closed last Saturday to open their premises and return to normal work. Shopowners whose stores remain shut have appealed to the Hebron military governor to be allowed to open. The governor has promised to consider their appeal.

AFTER EITAN

TEL AVIV - In a special session the Israeli government has agreed to appoint General Moshe Levy as Israel's next chief of staff.

AIR WAVES

The Israeli embassy in London has sent a long protest letter to the administration of British TV Channel 4, which recently broadcast a film about Um al-Fahm entitled 'On Our Land'. The Israeli embassy said the film, which was made by a British company, gives a distorted picture of life in Arab villages in Israel.

ISRAELIS AMBUSHED

BEIRUT - Two Israeli soldiers were injured in an ambush on an Israeli patrol near Rashidiyeh refugee camp. The two were transferred to Israel by helicopter.

ONE FOR ANOTHER

CAIRO - The Egyptian newspaper *Al Akhbar* reported that Saad Mortada, the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, will end his work in the post. He is to be succeeded by Omar Siri.

YOUTH DETAINED

The Israeli military authorities summoned the administration of the Balata refugee camp youth club and arrested them.

HOT FRUIT

Israel Radio said that fire broke out in an Israeli fruit factory in Hatzor in the Galilee causing damage estimated at millionsof shekels. The factory was almost totally destroyed. Police believe the fire was deliberately set.

STILL STRONG

Ycdiot Ahranot reported that Druse spiritual leaders in the Golan Heights have renewed their threat to excommunicate any Golan Druse who tries to obtain Israeli identity and that this threat has lead to tension in villages of the Heights.

BEDUIN STRIKE

Fifteen Naqab Beduin declared a hunger strike in protest at the confiscation by the "Green Patrol" of their sheep despite an order from the Beer Sheba magistrates court preventing this.

PLO AGAINST TERROR

BUDAPEST Salah Khalaf, Abu Iyyad, has condemned terrorism and particularly international terrorism. He asserted that the PLO rejects acts of terrorism under the cover of revolutionary slogans.

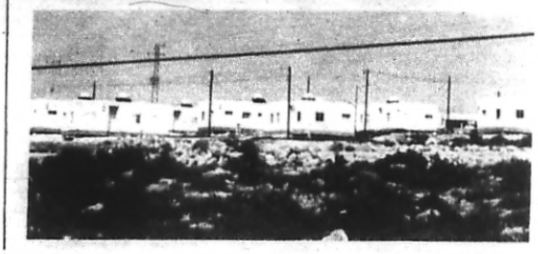
Khalaf arrived in Budapest last Friday at the head of a Palestinian delegation to hold talks with Hungarian officials on Palestinian-Hungarian cooperation.

LUCKY

NABLUS An Israeli car driver entered Rafidiyeh Hospital for treatment after he accidentally shot himself with his own rifle. He was then taken to Tel Hashomer.

DECLARATION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF ARAB LAND

Annexation to Jewish Council Means Confiscation of Arab Land in the Galilee



Al Ittihad published the text of the declaration of the Regional Committee for the Defence of Arab Land February 2, 1983. It was released on the eve of the Conference for the Defence of Land, held in Shafa 'Amr on February 26, 1983. The conference stressed the dangers of the racist authorities' decision to annex 150,000 dunums of land belonging to 18 Arab villages to the Misgav settlement regional council. The conference called for struggle against this decision and for its revocation. The report said: "Under cover of annexation to the regional council and closing areas on the pretext of military purposes, there has been an attempt to confiscate hundreds of thousands of dunums of Arab land.

"On October 10, 1982, Interior Minister Yosef Burg issued order 4416 by the power vested in him by articles 1 and 2 of the order on local councils which authenticates the map according to which the regional council Misgav takes its authority and influence.

"The Misgav regional council is made up of 23 Jewish settlements. The map in the district planning office in Nazareth shows the blocs given to each settlement according to the minister's order, number 237, from Kufr Manda in the south to Shaqour in the north.

"The land, most of which is Arab is estimated at 150,000 dunums. It

mainly belongs to Arab *fellahin* from the following villages:

(1) Ailaboun, 1282 dunums
(2) Deir Hanna, 9780 dunums
(3) 'Arrabeh, 14,500 dunums
(4) Kaukab, 24,000 dunums
(5) Nahef, 1100 dunums
(6) Deir al-Assad, 3229 dunums
(7) Sha'ab, 13 blocs
(8) Kaboul, 2477 dunums
(9) Sakhnin, 23,000 dunums
(10) Ibilin, 4 blocs
(11) Kufr Manda, 9000 dunums
(12) Rameh, 2000 dunums
(13) Majd al-Kurum, 1136 dunums
(14) Yarka, 11 blocs
(15) Jdaydeh, 1 bloc
(16) Julis, 13 blocs
(17) Makr, 13 blocs
(18) Fasouta, 1 bloc

"This is in addition to the (whole area of) two Arab villages Boura and Mi'ar which were destroyed in 1948.

"The minister's order has aroused grave concern with Arab local authorities, because the imposition of the authority of the Misgav regional council over such a large area of land is more than just a question of administration and planning, as Israel Koenig, Israeli governor of the northern district, claims.

"The evidence which the Regional Committee for the Defence of Land has confirms that this annexation is a step towards the confiscation and Judaisation of the region.

"The council's region of authority is an area of land over which a local council is entitled to exercise its authority and responsibility, in instances such as surveying land and collecting taxes. The council is entitled to devote 40 percent of the area under its control to the public interests, as well as considering the opinion of the public in planning and in launching any new development project by the government or any other party, such as laying electric cables, water pipes and telephone poles etc... This area of control was decided on by the interior minister prior to the establishment of (the Misgav) council.

"The order to place the land of dozens of Arab villages under the control of the Misgav council constitutes a great danger. It bestows wide powers upon the local councils of these settlements and gives them the sole right to collect local land taxes paid by Arab property owners to these settlement councils instead of to the Arab councils. This is especially damaging as these Arab councils suffer from stifling financial crises brought about by the interior ministry, which has drawn up a discriminatory policy regarding local services and possibilities for development.

"The danger of annexation of land to Misgav council is, to a large extent, a question of tax payment. The authority of the local committees under the power of Misgav regional council violates the right of these committees to decide on agricultural planning and aims at making life harder for the Arab farmer. Likewise, landowners are unable to dispose freely of their property since they must obtain an agreement or license from the settlement council if they want to execute any land project. Bringing in water for irrigation, setting up stables or outposts, or even watering their livestock becomes subject to the agreement of the local settlement committees.

"Thus the settlements have the right to undertake any development project on the land under their control. On occasion, the landowners are obliged to share in the cost of projects which they do not benefit from. The law guarantees the councils the right to confiscate 40 percent of the land for the public interest — the settlement's interest.

Introduction to the Confiscation of Land

"Thus the land, within the framework of the authority of the higher regional council, is easier to confiscate from the legal point of view. For this reason we oppose the interior minister's order to engulf the land of 18 villages in which the Arab population exceeds 80,000 persons, to the settlement council whose residents are no more than 1500 persons.

"It is naive to rely on the promises of the district governor that the property rights to the land will not be violated, other than to be incorporated by the local authorities whatever happens!

"In addition to the danger mentioned above, there are basic motives and logic to support our opposition to the minister's order to incorporate large areas into the Misgav council

(1) Landowners have the right to choose the local council they want to have authority over the land.

(2) Why has this above mentioned area of land been outside the control of the local authority during the years since the Arab local councils were established? There have been many requests from all the councils to widen their sphere of authority. The local council of 'Arrabeh, for example, made 26 requests from July 1965 to June 1982. These requests were turned down. A glance at the Misgav map shows that the 'Arrabeh council, for example, loses a whole bloc (19379) which was placed within its sphere of authority by the interior minister in 1963. The same is true for the Deir al-Assad local council which, according to the order, loses 3229 dunums, of which over 26 dunums are in a building area where there are eight licensed buildings.

"The head of Deir al-Assad local council received this reply from the northern district planner on February 25, 1982, to his request to widen the council's sphere of authority: 'The problem which we face is to define borders between development in which new settlements have been established and the region of Deir al-Assad's authority.'

"The reply of the northern district governor since August 1975 to the head of the local Ailaboun council provokes questions. He says, 'In my opinion according to the interior minister, blocs number 16417 and 15418 have been totally annexed to your council.'

"The recommendation remained 'ink on paper.'

(3) This land, as well as belonging to the residents of Arab villages, has been surveyed within the blocs and zoning maps of Arab villages. Thus it is natural that it should be within the sphere of authority of these villages. Anything else is unnatural and arouses doubts as to the intentions of the government.

(4) The number of settlers in the Misgav council region is not over 1500 persons for whom the minister has incorporated 150,000 dunums of land whereas the Arab villages, whose population is 10,000, have been given an area of authority of only 4882 dunums! If this is development, then what is dispersion?

(5) The interior minister's pretext, in his reply to (Democratic Front) MK Tawfiq Toubi (9.12.82) on the subject of the annexation of Arab land to the Misgav settlement was: 'It is necessary to unite all the new settlements established in recent years within one municipal authority.' Let the settlements unite but why should such unity be at the expense of 150,000 dunums of land belonging to Arab villages?

(6) Officials at the interior ministry admit that the local Arab councils, because of their financial crises, must search for sources of funds to cover their deficits. After land within the borders of the Arab villages has come under another region of authority, will the resources or land benefit the local councils with taxes?

"The residents of the village of Kaukab, for example, pay taxes for their land to the N'aman regional council, while they are prevented from setting up a local council to run village affairs.

The Danger of Plans to Expropriate Land from Us

"Because we believe there is a danger of plans to usurp our land and after consultations between the regional council of the heads of local Arab authority and the Regional Committee for Defence of the Land, it has been decided to call a conference to defend the land and to confront the danger facing our land in the Galilee and in the Triangle. The area closed in the Um al-Fahm region constitutes over 15 000 dunums and is faced with the danger of confiscation after the landowners have been prevented from entering their land without permits."

The Regional Committee for The Defence of Land
Haifa, February 16, 1983

ARAB LAND ANNEXED TO JEWISH COUNCILS

Under the slogan of "Defending the land means defending a people", the Committee for the Defence of Arab Land organised a popular meeting in Shafa 'Amr, February 26. The main point of discussion at the conference was the annexation of more than 150 thousand dunums belonging to 18 Palestinian villages in the Galilee and the Triangle, to the Jewish regional council of Misgav. The 3000 participants included 26 heads of local councils, 18 delegations from different villages, 5 Knesset members and a representative of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon.

Speakers called on the Israeli interior ministry to cancel the annexation decision, to extend the jurisdiction of Arab villages, and to appoint Palestinian representatives to national and regional planning committees. They also called on the ministry to increase financial assistance to Palestinian local councils to enable them to develop the villages and clear fiscal problems.

The conferences also called on the Israeli defense ministry to open the closed areas in the Triangle area to enable Palestinian farmers to use their fields and orchards as they have done for generations. There have recently been a series of closures in the Triangle.

The chairman of the Defence Committee, Reverend Shehade Shehade, gave the opening address. He outlined the implications of the annexation and its effects on the Palestinians, and said that the ministry's decision is a first step in a plan to further expropriate Arab land in Galilee.

Ibrahim Nimr, the mayor of Shafa 'Amr and the chairman of the regional committee of the Arab local councils, said that the Arab population in Israel and their representatives will "continue their political struggle" unless the interior ministry revokes its decision. He also attacked the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and blamed Israel for the "terror and murder campaign" being carried out against Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

A well prepared report, backed with figures and facts and explanations about the annexed lands, was presented by Raja Khatib, mayor of Deir Hanna, a member of the follow-up committee which was empowered by the local councils to provide full information about the whole issue. The report was distributed by the Committee before the meeting.

"Under the guise of annexation to regional councils and closing areas under the pretext of military training, there are attempts at taking over hundreds and thousands of land plots belonging to the Arab residents, and land which the Arab local authorities were using."

"On October 7, 1982, Israeli Minister of Interior Yosef Burg announced, in accordance with his powers according to the first and the second articles of the laws concerning local councils, an order approving the area of jurisdiction within which the regional Jewish council is empowered to exercise its power and influence."

Khatib said that the regional council of Misgav consists of 23 settlements. He added that the map which is in the regional planning office in Nazareth shows the land share of each settlement. "The land given to these settlements includes 237 blocs which extend from Kufur Manda to the Shaqour area in the north," he remarked. "Most of this land belongs to Arabs, it amounts to 15,000 dunums."

Raja Khatib refuted the claim of the Israeli authorities that the imposition of Misgav's authority is for administrative and planning purposes. He said that the evidence acquired by the Defence Committee confirms that this annexation is "just a step towards confiscation."

He explained: "The council's area of jurisdiction is the bulk of the land on which the local council has the right to exercise its legal responsibility and powers such as planning and levying taxes. The council also has the right to use 40 percent of its area of jurisdiction for public purposes."

Explaining the danger of the annexation, Khatib told the audience: "the annexation entitles the local committees in these settlements to wide powers. Their right to levy taxes . . . from the Arab landowners directs taxes from Arab local councils." He added that the gravity of the annexation goes beyond the tax levy. "The local settlement committees are authorised to create new agricultural regulations aimed at putting obstacles and difficulties before Arab farmers.

"The Arab landowners won't have free use of their land. They will need the agreement or a permit from the settlement council when they intend to establish any project in their land such as an irrigation system, stables, or even to graze livestock on it. The settlements have the right to set up development projects on the land under their jurisdiction and might even ask landowners to share the costs without extending any benefit to them.

"Therefore," Khatib said, "the law ensures, for the council, the right to confiscate 40 percent of the land for public purposes in the interests of the settlements. This is why we object to and condemn the order of the interior minister of annexing land belonging to 18 Arab villages whose population exceeds 80,000, to a settlement council whose population is hardly 1500."

Khatib asserted that landowners have a "legitimate and logical right" to choose the local authority under which they want their land to fall.

He also asked why this land remained outside the jurisdiction of the Arab local authorities since their establishment. He pointed out that Arrabeh local council had filed 26 requests that residents' land be attatched to the council's area of jurisdiction. The first was filed in 1965, the last in June 1982. All were rejected.

On the Misgav map, Khatib revealed, Arrabeh council loses a complete bloc which has been under its jurisdiction since 1963 with approval from the interior ministry. Arrabeh's 10,000 residents will control 4828 dunums compared to the 1500 settlers' 150,000. Likewise, Deir al-Assad will lose 3229 dunums of which 26 dunums are part of the construction zone and on which eight licensed houses stand.

Shortly before the meeting, Interior Minister Burg issued a statement promising to 'de-annex' several hundred dunums and put them under the control of the Arab local councils. Muhammad Mi'ari, a Committee member said, "this is intended as a tranquiliser."

The final resolutions of the conference summed up the discussions on land. They also praised the resolutions of the recent Palestine National Council in Algiers.

STATE DEPARTMENT REPORTS ON ISRAEL

Every year the US State Department publishes a human rights report on the countries which receive aid from the US. Theoretically, the record is supposed to encourage individual states to improve their human rights records and to deter those violating rights by denying them US aid. Practically, it seldom works out that way. The 1982 report on Israel was recently published.

Israel and the US pretty much agree on the invasion of Lebanon. In an echo of official Israeli pronouncements over the past few months, the US state department reveals: the invasion took place "following a terrorist attack on Israel's ambassador to Britain." The high rate of Palestinian and Lebanese civilian casualties, says the State Department, was because, "most PLO military forces and facilities are located in areas heavily populated by civilians."

Israel comes out of the Sabra and Shatila massacre smelling like roses. The only place where a hint of criticism creeps in is over the detention of prisoners in Ansar. The State Department says that the number of detainees has fallen from a mid-July high of 9000 to 5700 by mid-December. The 300 Syrian army prisoners are treated as POWs, the State Department reveals, but goes on to reveal that "as of the end of 1982 the Israeli government had not made public a full or partial list of names of the detainees and had not permitted relatives access to the detainees." Some prisoners were kept 'incommunicado' even from the Red Cross, the report states. Amnesty International, they note, has "expressed concern" over reports of ill-treatment and beatings which Israel has denied.

Perhaps the most shocking statement in the report is that in 1982 there were no political murders by Israel, no disappearances of Arabs and no clear cases of torture. "Where was the consulate during March and April?" one prominent Palestinian asked rhetorically, "On holiday?"

Freedom of speech and the press is restricted, according to the State Department, on "security grounds." The local press, highly critical of Israel, has "reports and editorials . . .regularly censored or excised." *Al Fajr's* distribution remains suspended as is that of other publications. *Al Talia* is singled out.

The report notes that "all of the West Bank universities were closed during 1982." The report also refers to the requirement of an anti-PLO oath from non-resident teachers wishing to lecture at the universities. "As a result, 26 faculty members, including two Americans," were forced to leave and 27 were "banned from teaching."

In the occupied territories, defined as including East Jerusalem, there is "constant tension" between the occupation authorities and the inhabitants. This tension results from control over Palestinian universities and a broad range of restrictions on economic, political, social and other affairs. The report estimates that 55 percent of the West Bank is under the "direct control" of the Israeli authorities.

There are even instances of internal contradiction in the report. Freedom of movement is "in many respects unrestricted for Arabs" it asserts. Then it lists security checks, the need for permits for overnight stays within the 1967 borders, town arrest, travel restrictions on "young men . . . residents of specific towns or areas, mayors and other leaders . . . students."

The report also alleges that the standard of living of "Arabs under occupation has risen steadily." It then goes on to note that "the taking of land for settlements and for military use in the occupied territories has adversely affected the livelihood of a considerable number of Arab residents."

The report also notes that the municipal elections scheduled for 1980 did not take place and that in 1982 seven elected mayors were dismissed "for refusing to cooperate with the Village Leagues." The report notes that West Bankers "complained that the Leagues' expanding activities undermine the elected Arab political structure."

ISRAEL PREPARES FOR VILLAGE LEAGUE IN GAZA

Gaza Strip residents foresee an attempt by the occupation authorities to set up a Village League in the Khan Yunis-Rafah area.

Israel Radio announced recently that the military authorities will appoint three new village councils in the southern Gaza Strip: Musabah in north Rafah, Qarara and Smiri, northeast of Khan Yunis. These areas are all suburban residential parts of the Khan Yunis and Rafah municipalities and, until now, have received utilities and other services from the municipal councils.

"The authorities want to appoint local councils in these areas to separate them from the body of the large towns," said a member of the Rafah municipal council, deposed last year. "This is part of the Israeli plan to cut Gaza Strip into little pieces and simultaneously subject the Palestinian residents to tighter control by collaborationist elements," said an employee in the Khan Yunis municipality. "You'll see," he added, "the authorities are trying to encourage a Village League type association here."

Israeli Soldiers Raid Jenin

Israeli soldiers conducted a wide search and arrested several residents of Jenin and neighbouring villages, February 21. No reasons were given for the measures.

The raids started at the house of Sami Kilani in Ya'abad. Kilani, who is a physics lecturer at Najah University, was taken to Fara'a detention centre. Kilani has been under town arrest for about one month. Before that, he spent four days in prison. He was not charged.

No charges have been filed since his latest detention. Among others also arrested were: Sa'id Hassan Hamdan Ghazawi, 30, a shopowner from Jenin, and Ahmad Zaki Araidi, 24, from Arrabeh.

Israeli soldiers also searched the house of Ghassan Mohammad Jarrar, member of Bir Zeit University student council. They also arrived to search Adi Zughbi's house. His home was left untouched because no one was in. Zughbi owns a grocery store in Jenin.

In a possibly related event, Fathi Fahmawi, head of the Jenin chamber of commerce, was summoned to the police station February 21, and questioned about a statement he published in *Al Quds* three days earlier.

The statement, which was directed to the Palestine National Council in Algiers, called for "the consolidation of unity within the Palestinian national movement."

SETTLERS MOUNT ATTACKS ON HEBRON

In a week of rising tension Israeli settlers have shot and injured, or kidnapped, several Palestinian residents from the Hebron district. Attacks involved bombs and firearms. Only two settlers were briefly detained and Hebron residents charge that the Israeli authorities are collaborating with the settlers to implement a policy of forcing Palestinian emigration. The first attack of the week occured at al-Qazazin mosque in the heart of Hebron's old city, February 25, when a bomb injured three worshippers.

The bomb was placed against the mosque wall. When it exploded, at around 1:00 pm, fragments flew more than 20 meters, injuring two people who were praying outside the mosque.

Another resident was injured by glass splinters from the shattered mosque windows; they were all later released from the hospital. One mosque guard told *Al Fajr* that had the bomb exploded five minutes later there would have been a "disaster." Apparently the bomb was meant to explode after prayers as worshippers were leaving the mosque. "Since prayer time is not precise, the sabotager could not pin-point the exact time for the worshippers' departure from the mosque," one official said.

Merchants in the area said that during the two weeks leading to the incident they had noticed an increase in settlers present around the mosque. "We are used to their coming for shopping and were not alarmed," said one.

The middle-aged guard believes that the bomb, which was hidden behind a pile of stones and dirt, was placed there the same morning, when the market area is usually empty on the Muslim holiday.

Firing at houses

The next attack occured on February 27. According to local residents, Kiryat Arba settlers fired pistols at the house of Nasser Muhammad Ja'abari, opposite the settlement. Describing the incident, Nasser Ja'abari said that all of his 14-member family were watching television in the lounge when they heard the sound of shots and breaking glass. "A state of fear and disorder overcame everybody."

"Suddenly, my little daughter, Alia, 4, shouted with pain. Her right foot was grazed by one of the five bullets which entered the house," said Nasser, in his late 40s, pointing out bullet holes in his walls.

A few minutes after the shooting, as everything became quiet, the family peeped out of the door, and saw two groups of men, each consisting of four, dispersing. "They were all speaking Hebrew, as they headed towards the Israeli settlement."

Police and border guards arrived later. They took the bullets and traced footprints in the fresh snow to the settlement. No arrest was made. The injured girl was taken to Hebron's Alia hospital for treatment.

The following morning, Nasser Ja'abari discovered blood stains on the white snow. Police inspectors took samples from it. The Ja'abari family said that they believe that one of the settlers somehow cut himself as they were walking in the hills. Later, they learned from the police that one settler had a cut on his hand.

On February 28, Fayeq Ja'abari, 12, a member of the same family, was kidnapped by a uniformed settler-soldier, and taken to Kiryat Arba. The boy and some of his friends were throwing snowballs and apparently hit the settler's jeep.

Nasser Ja'abari and the chief of the Hebron police went to the settlement and found Fayeq in the custody of settlement guards. He was ordered released by the police chief who affirmed that "it is not an offense to play in the snow."

Following the incident, the Israeli police commander of the southern region announced the establishment of an special team to investigate the incident. The assaulted family charged that the attackers are Jewish settlers from Kiryat Arba. "It is the duty of the Israeli authorities to put an end to their activities," Nasser Ja'abari pleaded.

Widening Activities

On February 28, Talib Shqair, 30, from Yatta, south of Hebron, escaped injury after Israeli settlers from El-Nakam settlement fired at his car. The Palestinian, a taxi driver on the Hebron-Yatta route, was on his way to Hebron to pick up passengers, when he passed two settlers. As he passed, water splashed the settlers. They then opened fire, he reported. An acquaintance of Shqair said that the bullets shattered his rear window, and embedded themselves in the seats. The Palestinian resident then complained to the police.

Shqair's acquaintance, who owns a grocery store in Yatta, said that the police advised the taxi driver not to press charges, "because he could be charged with splashing water on the settlers." Apparantly Shqair agreed. It is believed that the two settlers were released.

Panic?

Hebron is clearly an alarmed town. Panic mounted, March 1, when police defused a bomb in the car of a local construction merchant. Amer Natshe of Wadi Tuffah became suspicious when he noticed wires beneath his dashboard. He informed the police who safely detonated the bomb.

As an *Al Fajr* correspondent was speaking to Hebron's acting-mayor Mustafa Natsheh, he received a telephone call informing him that settlers had kidnapped two teenage students from Yatta's secondary school.

The two youths, Ra'ed Mohammad Da'ais and Ayed Yusef Muhammad, were abducted by four armed settlers from inside the school. Sources in the school said that students had held a demonstration and set tyres afire before they returned to their classrooms.

The four settlers who were driving by, stopped when they saw the burning tyres, broke into the school, and forced students, at gun point, to remove them from the road. The settlers then abducted the two students, and drove away.

Later, the families of the two boys learned that they were being detained in Hebron prison.

Mustafa Natsheh charges that "settlers are taking the law into their own hands, and the responsible authorities are not doing anything to prevent them from doing so." He charged that the settlers aim at making life for the Palestinian residents unbearable, "in order to force them to emigrate."

W.B. RESIDENTS DEMONSTRATE

There were demonstrations in Ramallah and Nablus this week as Palestinians reacted to recent attacks by settlers.

Nablus streets seemed empty and deserted March 1, while large numbers of Israeli soldiers, armed with rifles and clubs, roamed through the town and were stationed at the entrances of the Qasabeh. The Qasabeh quarter in Nablus and Ein Beit Ilma refugee camp, with a population of 4000, near Nablus, were curfewed for two days after residents threw rocks at Israeli jeeps. Occupation authorities also ordered the closure of Mazuz al-Masri secondary school for one month starting March 1 under the pretext that students of the school had also thrown stones at passing military vehicles. "In the old city of Nablus, the demonstrators set tyres alight," Israeli Radio reported February 28. The report said Israeli soldiers used tear gas and opened fire to disperse the demonstrators.

Ramallah and al-Bireh

Students in Ramallah and al-Bireh schools cut classes and took to the streets March 1. At around 8 am, soldiers were seen tear gassing children to disperse a demonstration near the Ramallah bus station. Eyewitnesses said that soldiers stopped passers-by and ordered them to remove tyres set afire by demonstrators.

In the afternoon, students demonstrated in Sharafa Street and stoned soldiers and military vehicles. Ramallah sources reported that five young men were arrested. Three-quarters of the shopkeepers in Ramallah and al-Bireh closed their shops.

Kalandia

Thirty residents in Kalandia were arrested after being chased by Israeli soldiers. Soldiers were seen opening fire at students and hurling tear gas at demonstrators. The windscreens of two military vehicles were smashed.

Dheisheh Camp

A curfew on Dheisheh camp continues as *Al Fajr* goes to press. On March 1, all traffic coming from Jerusalem was diverted through the Beit Jala road.

The curfew followed the stoning of a military bus. In a revenge action, the bus stopped by the military headquarters along the main road and settlers started stoning Arab vehicles. The windshield of at least five cars were smashed. Cars hit included one belonging to a driving instructor. Several women students were injured.

Jerusalem

In Jerusalem, a large number of soldiers was seen at the entrances of the Old City conducting body searches and taking ID cards from pedestrians.

TULKARM RESIDENTS PRESSURED TO JOIN VILLAGE LEAGUE

The Israeli military authorities, February 25, released on bail, Ziad Yunis, head of the agricultural marketing society in Qalqilia. Yunis had spent eight days in an Israeli prison on charges of opposing the Village League, membership in an "illegal organisation", and possession of "illegal literature". His trial date has not yet been scheduled.

Two weeks ago, Fayad Fayad, a Tulkarm dentist, was released after he completed a 15-day jail sentence and paid an IS35,000 fine for similar charges.

The two West Bank residents were arrested following the resignation from the Village League of 14 Tulkarm district village council heads.

Two weeks ago, a ceremony was held in Habla to establish a Tulkarm Village League. It was attended by the Israeli head of the 'civil administration', Shlomo Elia.

Tulkarm area villagers say that there is no League there since most members withdrew before the ceremony. "That's why they held the ceremony in the village of Habla and the head of the League is Ismail Marzouk, who heads the Habla Village League," one resident said.

Fayad Fayad, a member of the Tulkarm Dentists Union, said that at his court hearing the head of Deir al-Ghsoun village council, Abd al-Majid Qasim Khadr, said that he and other village heads decided to quit on their own initiative.

Several Tulkarm village council heads and mukhtars told *Al Fajr* that they were threatened with dismissal and imprisonment if they refused to join the Village League. The Israeli authorities withdrew the seal and stamp of Mahmoud Abd al-Qader Khalid, mukhtar of Jayus, after he refused to join the League. The mukhtar of Deir al-Ghsoun, Adnan Alayan, was also removed from office and replaced by Adnana Atwhe, said to be "friendly" to the Israelis.

Among other means used to pressure village heads to join the League are economic pressures, they report. Residents of Illar told *Al Fajr* that their village was barred from receiving electricity because the council head refused to join the League.

Ziad Yunis, arrested at his Qalqilia home, February 17, was taken briefly to Tulkarm prison. Later he was transfered to Fara'a detention camp, near Jenin.

Yunis was interrogated on his alleged activities against the Village League. He was accused of inciting village council heads to quit the Village League. Yunis did not deny that he opposes the Village Leagues, and that he has occasionally expressed his opinion on the issue. He denied, however, that he "incited" Leaguers to suspend their membership.

Ziad Yunis was himself summoned several times to the military compound, where he was approached to join the Israeli-backed League. Despite reported threats that he would have to resign his post or be arrested, he refused.

At the February 22 court session, the Israeli prosecutor added the charges of membership in an "illegal organisation" and possession of illegal publications," in order, Ziad's friends say, to give ground for remanding him in custody. He was detained a further three days, before being released on IS10,000 bail. His passport has been confiscated.

Dhahriyeh Suffers 21-Day Curfew

On January 30, a curfew was imposed on Dhahriyeh, a village in the southern part of the West Bank. It lasted 21 days. The reason for the curfew was, as usual, a stone throwing incident. An Israeli woman was wounded and died a week later in hospital after the military vehicle in which she was riding was stoned. The whole 10,000 population of the village was kept imprisoned in their houses by the Israeli occupation authorities as collective punishment for the incident.

The Jerusalem-Beer Sheba road, which divides the village in two, and all main entrances were blockaded. The only movement in the village were Israeli military patrols and Israeli civilian cars which were allowed through the village.

Locals spent the whole day and nighttime between the walls of their houses, except for an hour given to them to buy food. During this hour people rushed from their homes in what they now describe as "hysterical haste" to the shops. One hour is hardly enough time for such a large number of people to purchase what they need. "You can imagine what happens when all services are not working," said one resident. "The only difference between a real prison and the curfew, is the size of the place," another noted.

Great Loss

The curfew has left the population with a great loss. About 3000 workers who commute daily to Israeli towns on Egged buses missed two-thirds of the month. Some of them lost their jobs as a result. Five elementary and secondary schools were forced to close during the whole period of the curfew. More than 2000 pupils remained at home. Perishable meat, vegetables, fruit and dairy products in about 15 different stores were spoiled.

One textile worker, Abed Kaaki, told *Al Fajr* that not going to work for 20 days means that workers will be in a very difficult financial situation next month: "I will have to borrow money from relatives and friends in order to keep me alive." Another worker, Ali Sharteh, said, "we are not like Israeli workers who enjoy better economic conditions and have savings in the bank."

SETTLER HARASSMENT SPREADS TO BETHLEHEM

Settler harassment remains concentrated in the Hebron region and Dhahriyeh camp, but last week began to creep into the Bethlehem region, Dheisheh camp in particular.

Over 300 settlers drove in four buses and five or six private cars and attempted to enter Dheisheh refugee camp, March 3.

Eyewitnesses told *Al Fajr* that the armed settlers stationed their vehicles across the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road, opposite the camp. Settlers then made their way into the camp. Israeli soldiers blocked their way and arguments broke out. Officers at the checkpoints eventually agreed to let settlers through on the condition that they disarm. The settlers refused. After a brief respite, the settlers got inside the camp by crowding the Garasheih gate. Camp residents say the settlers retreated, however, when they saw that the Palestinians were ready to defend themselves.

Hamdi Faraj, a journalist resident in Dheisheh, who has not seen his family during the 10 days of sporadic curfews, told *Al Fajr* that the residents of the camp were ready to sacrifice their lives to defend their camp. There were small groups of men and women armed with sticks, rods and knives.

Settlers broke into the Yatta secondary school for the second time, March 3, and kidnapped two students. Burhan Namoura, owner of a grocery in the Hebron district town, told *Al Fajr* that about 11 Kiryat Arba settlers entered the school at 7:30 am, asked the teachers to get out of the classrooms and then forced the students to turn their faces to the wall.

The settlers remained at the school until 11:00 am and took away two students. Mustafa Natshe, the acting mayor of Hebron, told *Al Fajr* that the settlers in Kiryat Arba are "responsible for all the terrorist activities in the town."

TOWN RESTRICTION ORDERS ON ARAB MAYOR RENEWED

The Israeli military authorities renewed the town arrest order on Wahid Hamdallah, elected mayor of Anabta, March 3. The new order runs for six months. He has now been under town arrest for 42 months.

Hamdallah was first served with the order at the beginning of April 1980, along with several other mayors and public figures. The measure, which restricted Palestinians to the town limits of their communities, was part of an attack on the National Guidance Committee, which led Palestinian opposition in the occupied territories to the Camp David accords.

Abu Ra'id (Hamdallah) said he had to wait six weeks last year for a permit to receive treatment at the Makassed hospital in Jerusalem. "My lawyer had to pursue the case and kept contacting the authorities until they gave me permission," he said.

Before he was sacked, Hamdallah spent two weeks in jail on charges of violating the town restriction order. He was tried and found guilty, which paved the way for ousting him from the municipality to which he was elected in 1976.

In a related story, Ali Jamal, a Jenin resident, was freed from town arrrest, March 2. Jamal, 37, was served with the town restriction order one year ago following his release from jail. He spent seven years under administrative detention.

New Attempt Against Al-Aqsa Mosque

Israeli explosive experts safely detonated a two to three kilogram bomb close to al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, March 4. A mosque guard, who refused to be identified by name, said he believes that the bomb was planted by ultra-religious settlers.

The bomb was discovered at around 10:00 am by worshippers on their way to Friday prayers. It was in a plastic bag and was left near al-Majlis gate, one of the main gates leading to the mosque. Police guarding the mosque closed the doors and emptied the area. After the bomb was defused, guards at the entrances began checking bags as an extra precautionary measure.

A Palestinian guard said that al-Majlis gate is used by all worshippers who come to prayers via Damascus gate. "Had it exploded when people were entering or leaving the mosque, it would have meant a real disaster," one of the guards told *Al Fajr*.

During the past year, al-Aqsa mosque, one of the holiest shrines for Moslems, has been subjected to several attacks by Jewish fanatics. The most severe attack came last April when an Israeli soldier forced his way into the mosque and shot and killed two people, wounding scores of others.

BOMB BLAST KILLS JERUSALEM MAN

A Palestinian man was killed by a bomb blast on the Shufat camp-Hizma road, March 4.

Sheikh Abd al-Karim Sabah Abu Sneineh, 30, had taken his brother Kamel Abu Sneineh, 18, on a trip to buy sheep in Hizma. Kamel reported that shortly before arriving at Hizma, Abd al-Karim asked his brother to stop for a few minutes. Moments later he heard an explosion and saw the body of his brother blown to pieces.

Kamel returned home to notify his family and the police. Later the same day, 60 soldiers broke into Abd al-Karim's Shufat camp house and arrested his wife Nayfeh. Soldiers smashed windows and doors and looted JD 160. Soldiers and secret service agents arrested six of Abd al-Karim's brothers, Yasir, 25, Yousef, 32, Anwar, 27, Taysir, 23, Muhammad, 40, and Kamel. Nayfeh was released at 10:00. She told *Al Fajr* that intelligence agents had interrogated her about her husband's friends and those who usually pray with him.

CALL FOR WITHDRAWAL OF WEAPONS FROM SETTLERS

The fascist gangs of Gush Emunim have escalated their aggression against the residents of the occupied territories. The planting of a bomb near a mosque in Hebron, the shots fired at Arab houses and the attacks against children on the pretext that they threw stones at settlers are all examples of this escalation.

The settlers who carry out the attacks enjoy full backing and support from the military authorities, and the Israeli government, which supply them with weapons and ammunition in order to use them against the inhabitants of the occupied territories. Recently, however, the fascist gangs have started to point their weapons at the democratic forces in Israel. This was clear in the grenade throwing incident against "Peace Now" demonstrators which resulted in the death of Emil Greenzweig.

The struggle against settler terrorism in the occupied territories and against the occupation is a continuation of the struggle for democracy in Israel.

We express solidarity with the residents of the occupied territories against settler harassment. We also express solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against the occupation.

We are struggling for a peaceful solution based on ending the occupation and creating a Palestinian state next to Israel. We Demand:

- Withdrawal of weapons from the settlers.
- An end to the settlement policy and the dismantling of existing settlements.
- An end to the occupation.
- The establishment of peace.

Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University

Natshe: 'The Settlers are Acting As a State Within a State'

Al Fajr recently spoke with Mustafa Natshe, acting mayor of Hebron, about the timing of, and reasons behind, the latest series of settler attacks in the Hebron area.

Al Fajr: **Do you think that the recent attacks in Hebron are related?**

Natshe: Except for the attack on the Yatta road, I think they were all carried out by the same settler group.

Al Fajr: **Is the timing of the attacks significant, in your opinion?**

Natshe: They might have timed them to coincide with the new Israeli defence minister's entry to office. I think they intended to test his reaction to their policies.

Al Fajr: **The Israeli police commissioner of Hebron declared that he has established a special investigation team to look into the incident. What do you think about this development?**

Natshe: Several attacks have occurred in Hebron, but the perpetrators were never arrested. I am afraid that the investigation will become worthless as time progresses, without their catching the attackers.

Al Fajr: **So you think there is some kind of coordination between the settlers and the Israeli authorities?**

Natshe: Unfortunately, the settlers are acting as a state within a state, without any attempts on the part of the authorities to stop them. In fact it is possible they coordinate activities in order to implement the some policy: forcing the Palestinian residents to emigrate in order to replace them with Jewish settlers.

Al Fajr: **Is it possible that they are taking revenge for the stone-throwing which occured a month ago in Dhahriyeh?**

Natshe: I think that they are flexing their muscles. In an interview on the Hebrew language radio, settlers announced that their vengeance will be "much more fierce" than what is being carried out now.

KALANDIA CAMP TERRORIZED BY ISRAELI SOLDIERS AND SETTLERS

For three successive nights, March 7-9, Israeli settlers entered Kalandia refugee camp and verbally threatened the 18,000 residents with expulsion. More than 100 youths from the camp are in jail.

Confrontation started on March 7 when soldiers chased a group of girls into the local girls' secondary school. They forced their way inside and told teachers they would close it unless they brought out the kids who threw stones, according to the teachers. On the same day another group of soldiers broke into the boys' school, and made similar threats. Teachers report that only intervention from UNRWA officials saved them from arrest.

That night at 9:00 pm the settlers made their first appearance. The settlers, in two buses and three cars and accompanied by border guards, entered the camp and fired in the air. The same procedure was followed on the next two nights. During the shooting, settlers called through loudspeakers for residents to "hand over stone-throwers." One woman in the camp told *Al Fajr*, "They made our lives unbearable. Nobody dared to even peep through the window because they might shoot." There were similar raids on the next two days. Settlers were accompanied by soldiers, locals say.

On March 8, Israeli soldiers arrested four youths in a 1:30 am raid. Those held included 12-ye. old Anwar Shehadeh. The other three are Husni Bzi', 19, Naser Nimer, 18 and Mursi Abd al-Hadi, 16. Residents of the camp say that Husni Bzi is being held for the second time in 10 days.

Since the settler raids started there have been demonstrations in the camp daily. There have been several reports of Israeli cars being stoned.

Taysir Sijdiyeh, 18, who spent 45 days in interrogation because he was suspected of demonstrating and throwing stones at soldiers, told *Al Fajr* that immediately after he was abducted the soldiers beat him up. He and three others were then taken to Ramallah prison compound where they were treated in the same manner. However, they continued to deny having participated in demonstrations.

"After 18 days detention in Ramallah prison we were brought before a military court on charges of disturbing the peace, and stoning Israeli soldiers." The youths were not even allowed to hire a lawyer to defend them. After a short formal hearing the four youths were sentenced to 45 days imprisonment and fined IS20,000 each. The four youths were then transferred to Fara'a detention camp, near Jenin.

Residents of the camp say that out of the 150 students who were rounded up from the UNRWA vocational training center 20 days ago, over 100 are still in jail. Some of the 50 youths who were released were fined up to IS50 000.

Kalandia residents complain that the military is doing nothing to stop settlers getting into the camp. An Ibrahimiyya secondary school student said the reason for the military guard on the settlers is to stop them from shooting to kill or planting bombs.

'Civil Administration' Infringes on Jerusalem Electric Company's Jurisdiction

The Village Leagues and the 'civil administration' opened an electricity system in Bil'in, March 4, in violation of the Jerusalem District Electricity Company (JEC) concession which covers most of the West Bank. The JEC sent a memorandum protesting to the Israeli occupation authorities at Beit El, March 5.

The head of the 'civil administration', Shlomo Ilya, inaugurated the private electric generator in Bil'in, the Ramallah district, at a special ceremony attended by the Leaguers. He told Israeli TV later that the JEC current "does not meet the needs of the villagers."

The company rebuts the claim and accuses the Leagues and Israel of stopping them from extending power to Bil'in.

In August 1982, two contractors employed by the company, Mahmoud Jadallah and Mustafa Khamies, and their workers were working near the village as part of an agreed scheme to electrify nine villages in the area. They were stopped by the Israeli authorities and their ID cards were confiscated.

Anwar Nusseibeh, the general manager of the company, told *Al Fajr* that the JEC applied to the Ministry of Energy in 1979 for lines to Bil'in, Ain Arik, Deir Bzii', Kufr Ne'mah, Kharbatha, Deir Qadis, Ni'lin, Qibya and Budrus. The ministry did not respond but, according to the company's concessions, three months after an application has been submitted it has the right to start work.

Anwar Nusseibeh said he has contacted the Israeli authorities several times but has not received a license. He says that after preventing the contractors from completing their work, the authorities did not offer any explanation and that therefore the electricity connection has been postponed.

Abd el-Rahman Mahmoud Hassan, company engineer, termed "false" the pretext that the electric current is weak.

JEC Expansion

The company has recently bought four generators for their Ramallah and Jericho power stations to increase the output. The authorities have prevented the company from connecting them as it does not have a license. Fathalla Ghneim, the manager of the JEC's Dibwan department, argues that the company does not need a license as the generators were bought from Israeli agents.

JEC spokesmen say that the company has connected 50 West Bank villages in the past two years.

The company concession covers a 20 kilometer radius from Jerusalem and the area down to Jericho and the Allenby Bridge.

The Israeli Ministry of Energy attempted to order a compulsory purchase of the company in 1982, but the Israeli High Court stopped the forced sale.

Israelis Seize Deir Dibwan Land

The Israeli authorities seized 1000 dunums of fertile land from Deir Dibwan in the Ramallah district, March 3, for construction of a garbage incinerator. Landowners in the town pledged to fight the confiscation order. The Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property sent letters to the landowners, March 2 and 3, instructing "those who claim a right to the land to go to the local military government headquarters and claim compensation." The letters, which were received by 45 landowners, stated that they must bring documents proving their ownership of the land.

Hijazi Rashid, elected mayor of the town who was ousted by the 'civil administration', July 11, 1982, told *Al Fajr* that in the present case the Israeli authorities are using Jordanian law to confiscate land from Palestinian owners. He said they intend to use the garbage processing plant mainly for waste from Israeli settlements. "They included Palestinian cities to justify their actions. Not far from the proposed site there are plots of barren land which they could use for the plant," Rashid said.

Residents say they grow cereals on the land. It is adjacent to olive groves and is an important source of income. More than anything else the residents fear that the confiscation might be the first step in a wider plan to seize more land. They lost several hundred dunums to two Israeli settlements last year.

Speaking on behalf of the 6000 residents, the elected mayor condemned the seizure as "part of the Israeli plan to deprive the Palestinian people of their land."

UNRWA Reports on Threats Palestinians in Lebanon Face

UNRWA News, the aid organisation's monthly bulletin, reported that over the past few weeks agency officials in Lebanon have noted an escalating campaign of harassment against Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon. Numerous families living in the Sidon area have been ordered by armed men to leave their homes under threat of violence. Corpses have been found in the vicinity of Ain al-Hilweh camp.

In response to this situation, *UNRWA News* said Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck appealed to the governments of France, Italy, Britain and United States to use their influence to obtain the necessary protection for refugees. He also took the matter up with the governments of Lebanon and Israel, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

On February 23, Rydbeck flew to New York to discuss the security situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and other matters, with United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

STAFF CONCERNED

UNRWA staff members in Vienna have written to Commissioner-General Rydbeck to express their concern over events in South Lebanon. They said they feared that something of the magnitude of the massacres in Sabra and Shatila could be in the making, but in a piecemeal fashion that would not attract media and world attention.

Rydbeck told staff that he fully understood their apprehensions. He said that although UNRWA has no legal mandate or physical means to act as protector of the Palestinian refugees, there has never been any doubt in his mind that the agency has a moral responsibility "to do everything in its power to help secure adequate protection for them."

CENTRE REHABLILITATION

The news sheet also reported that the Norwegian Refugee Council is providing funds to set up a rehabilitation centre in Tyre for Palestinian refugees who have been wounded or are polio victims. UNRWA will provide some staff and medical supplies for the centre while the NRC will provide operating funds of over US $170,000 and pay the cost of a van to transport patients to and from the centre.

DISPLACED REFUGEES

As a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last June, 8763 Palestinian refugees are displaced at present in the Syrian Arab Republic. Of these, 8192 refugees are in the Damascus area, 236 in the southern area, 237 in the Homs-Hama area, 53 in the Allepo area and 45 in other areas.

According to UNRWA registration data, 1383 of the displaced refugees are from Beirut, 2054 from the mountain area, 2866 from Sidon and 2460 from Tyre.

Israeli Military Seizes Beitunia Land

Twenty-seven landowners from Beitunia, in the Ramallah district, received notices from the local military governorate, February 27, informing them of a decision to confiscate nearly 300 dunums of their land. The letters claim that the confiscation is "necessary for military requirements."

Residents of the town complain that the land seizure will complete the encirclement of Beitunia from three sides.

The seized land lies three kilometres from town. The hilly area, known as Ain Abdallah, is planted with olives, grapes and figs. It also contains a Muslim shrine — Abu Zaitoun.

The confiscation letters, signed by the Ramallah area Custodian of Absentee Property, "invited" the landowners to take their ownership documents to the military to get compensation. Beitunia landowners asserted that none of them went.

Ismail Mousa Taher, one of the landowners, and a US passport-holder, said that under no condition will he accept compensation for his land. "My land represents my ties to Palestine, and I am not ready to give that up for any sum of money."

Taher explained that he does not need the money the military is offering. "If they want to take it by force, what can I do?" he commented.

Most of the landowners live in the Americas. They all have homes in Beitunia and are permitted to return home annually.

Beitunia is surrounded by settlements and military camps from three sides: Beitunia military camp to the east, Giva'at Zev settlement to the south, and Tira military camp and a settlement to the west.

Deputy Mayor of Beitunia Ali Abu Zaiter said that the municipality "stands with residents against the Israeli land confiscation schemes."